THE BOOK OF MOTHER VERSE

Collected by

JOSEPH MORRIS
AND
ST. CLAIR ADAMS

DENISON UNIVERSITY



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THE BOOK
OF
MOTHER VERSE

THE BOOK OF MOTHER VERSE

COLLECTED BY

JOSEPH MORRIS

AND

ST. CLAIR ADAMS

COMPILERS OF "IT CAN BE DONE," "SONGS FOR FISHERMEN," "FACING FORWARD," "THE BOOK OF BABY VERSE," "THE BOOK OF FRIENDSHIP VERSE," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK

GEORGE SULLY & COMPANY

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Printed in U. S. A.

TO A MOTHER
AND
THE MEMORY OF A MOTHER

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FOREWORD

THIS is a book of poems which enshrine motherhood—which sing of the love the mother evokes, and of the still greater love the mother bestows. Some of the pieces represent high literary excellence, but alongside these are many whose chief commendation is their long and sure appeal to the human heart.

No use is here made of the poems devoted primarily to babyhood, because these have been assembled in a companion volume, *The Book of Baby Verse*. Attention is focused upon the mother herself. Every mood and aspect of her, every phase of humankind's indebtedness to her love, her patience, and her self-sacrifice, is fittingly recorded and acclaimed.

As a gift book the volume is intended equally for the young mother and for the mother whose children's childhood lies in the memoried past. It is especially suited for presentation on the mother's birthday or on either of those two other days which are forever associated with her—Christmas and Mothers' Day. In the multitude of periods set apart by the public in honor of notable personages, ideas, and causes, a day sacred to the mother has at last been included. Strange it is that such a day was not consecrated sooner. The movement toward its establishment began in 1908 as a celebration among churches and Sunday Schools in Philadelphia. The idea originated with Miss Anna Jarvis, who

had been asked by the superintendent of a Sunday School in Virginia in which her mother had been active to arrange a memorial service. The movement, though thus tardily launched, appealed to feelings universal and hallowed, with the result that in 1914 the second Sunday in May was officially designated as Mothers' Day by a joint resolution in Congress on the 8th of May, and was so proclaimed by President Wilson on the following day. Thenceforward the annual observance has been unbroken. That this volume may be entirely in keeping with the spirit and purpose of Mothers' Day, is the cherished wish of the editors.

Acknowledgment is gratefully extended to numerous poets and publishers for their kindness in granting the use of copyright material.

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THE BOOK
OF
MOTHER VERSE

THE BOOK OF MOTHER VERSE

MOTHER O' MINE

IF I were hanged on the highest hill,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose love would follow me still,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were drowned in the deepest sea,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!
I know whose tears would come down to me,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

If I were damned of body and soul,
I know whose prayers would make me whole,
Mother o' mine, O mother o' mine!

Rudyard Kipling.

From the Dedication in
"The Light That Failed."

A MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY

LORD JESUS, Thou hast known
A mother's love and tender care:
And Thou wilt hear,
While for my own
Mother most dear
I make this birthday prayer.

Protect her life, I pray,
Who gave the gift of life to me;
And may she know,
From day to day,
The deepening glow
Of joy that comes from Thee.

As once upon her breast
Fearless and well content I lay,
So let her heart
On Thee at rest,
Feel fear depart
And trouble fade away.

Ah, hold her by the hand,
As once her hand held mine;
And though she may
Not understand
Life's winding way,
Lead her in peace divine.

I cannot pay my debt
For all the love that she has given;
But Thou, love's Lord,
Wilt not forget
Her due reward,—
Bless her in earth and heaven.

Henry van Dyke.

From "The Poems of Henry van Dyke,"
Copyright, 1911,
Charles Scribner's Sons.

ONLY ONE

HUNDREDS of stars in the pretty sky;
Hundreds of shells on the shore together;
Hundreds of birds that go singing by;
Hundreds of bees in the sunny weather.

Hundreds of dewdrops to greet the dawn;
Hundreds of lambs in the purple clover;
Hundreds of butterflies on the lawn;
But only one mother the wide world over.

George Cooper.

MOTHER'S DAY

LET every day be Mother's Day!
Make roses grow along her way
And beauty everywhere.
Oh, never let her eyes be wet
With tears of sorrow or regret,
And never cease to care!
Come, grown-up children, and rejoice
That you can hear your mother's voice!

A day for her! For you she gave
Long years of love and service brave;
For you her youth was spent.
There was no weight of hurt or care
Too heavy for her strength to bear;
She followed where you went;
Her courage and her love sublime
You could depend on all the time.

No day or night she set apart
On which to open wide her heart
  And welcome you within;
There was no hour you would not be
First in her thought and memory,
  Though you were black as sin!
Though skies were gray or skies were blue
Not once has she forgotten you.

Let every day be Mother's Day!
With love and roses strew her way,
  And smiles of joy and pride!
Come, grown-up children, to the knee
Where long ago you used to be
  And never turn aside;
Oh, never let her eyes grow wet
With tears, because her babes forget.

Edgar A. Guest.

From "When Day Is Done,"
Copyright, 1921,
The Reilly & Lee Co.

THE BRAVEST BATTLE

THE bravest battle that ever was fought;
  Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find it not;
  It was fought by the mothers of men.

Nay, not with cannon or battle shot,
  With sword or nobler pen;

Nay not with eloquent word or thought,
From mouths of wonderful men,

But deep in a walled-up woman's heart—
Of woman that would not yield,
But patiently, silently bore her part—
Lo! there in that battlefield.

No marshaling troop, no bivouac song;
No banner to gleam and wave;
And oh! these battles they last so long—
From babyhood to the grave!

. . ., faithful still as a bridge of stars,
She fights in her walled-up town—
Fights on and on in the endless wars,
Then, silent, unseen—goes down.

Joaquin Miller.

From "Complete Poetical Works,"
Harr Wagner Publishing Co.

ROCK ME TO SLEEP

BACKWARD, turn backward, O Time in your flight,
Make me a child again just for to-night.
Mother, come back from the echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore;
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep;—
Rock me to sleep, mother,—rock me to sleep.

Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years.
I am so weary of toil and of tears,—
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain,—
Take them, and give me my childhood again.
I have grown weary of dust and decay,
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away;
Weary of sowing for others to reap;—
Rock me to sleep, mother,—rock me to sleep.

Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you.
Many a summer the grass has grown green,
Blossom'd, and faded our faces between,
Yet with strong yearning and passionate pain
Long I to-night for your presence again.
Come from the silence so long and so deep;—
Rock me to sleep, mother,—rock me to sleep.

Over my heart in the days that are flown,
No love like mother-love ever has shown;
No other worship abides and endures,—
Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours;
None like a mother can charm away pain
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain.
Slumber's soft calms o'er my heavy lids creep;—
Rock me to sleep, mother,—rock me to sleep.

Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,
Fall on your shoulders again as of old;
Let it drop over my forehead to-night,
Shading my faint eyes away from the light;

For with its sunny-edged shadows once more
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore;—
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep;—
Rock me to sleep, mother,—rock me to sleep.

Mother, dear mother, the years have been long
Since I last listen'd your lullaby song;
Sing, then, and into my soul it shall seem
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.
Clasped to your heart in a loving embrace,
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,
Never hereafter to wake or to weep;—
Rock me to sleep, mother,—rock me to sleep.

Elizabeth Akers.

A MOTHER-SONG

MOTHER, O mother! forever I cry for you,
Sing the old song I may never forget;
Even in slumber I murmur and sigh for you,—
Mother, O mother,
Sing low, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! the years are so lonely,
Filled but with weariness, doubt and regret!
Can't you come back to me—for to-night only,
Mother, my mother,
And sing, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! of old I had never
  One wish denied me, nor trouble to fret;
Now—must I cry out all vainly forever,—
  Mother, sweet mother,
    O sing, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

Mother, O mother! must longing and sorrow
  Leave me in darkness, with eyes ever wet,
And never the hope of a meeting to-morrow?
  Answer me, mother,
    And sing, "Little brother,
Sleep, for thy mother bends over thee yet!"

James Whitcomb Riley.

From the Biographical Edition
Of the complete works of James Whitcomb Riley,
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The Bobbs-Merrill Co.

TO MY MOTHER

HOW fair you are, my mother!
  Ah, though 'tis many a year
Since you were here,
Still do I see your beauteous face,
  And with the glow
Of your dark eyes cometh a grace
  Of long ago.
So gentle, too, my mother!
  Just as of old, upon my brow,
  Like benedictions now,

Falleth your dear hand's touch;
And still, as then,
A voice that glads me overmuch
Cometh again,
My fair and gentle mother!

How you have loved me, mother,
I know not power to tell,
Knowing full well
That even in the rest above
It is your will
To watch and guard me with your love,
Loving me still.
And, as of old, my mother,
I am content to be a child,
By mother's love beguiled
From all these other charms;
So to the last
Within thy dear, protecting arms
Hold thou me fast,
My guardian angel, mother.

Eugene Field.

From "Poems of Eugene Field,"
Copyright, 1910, by Julia S. Field.
Charles Scribner's Sons.

MOTHERHOOD

THOU shalt have grace where glory is forgot;
The love all luminous in the world's last night;
Thy children's arms shall be thy necklace bright,
And all love's roses clamber to thy cot.

And if a storm one steadfast star should blot
From thy pure heaven, God's angels shall relight
The lamps for thee, and make the darkness white;
The lilies of His love shall be thy lot!

He shall give all His angels charge of thee;
Thy coming and thy going shall be known.
Their steps shall shine before thee radiantly,
Lest thou shouldst dash thy foot against a stone.
The cross still stands. Who shall that love condemn
Whose mother-lips kissed Christ at Bethlehem?

Frank L. Stanton.

Printed in and permission from
"The Atlanta Constitution."

A LIFE STORY

"He is too young to know it now,
But some day he will know."

—EUGENE FIELD.

ABOVE her little sufferer's bed,
With all a mother's grace,
She stroked the curly, throbbing head,
And smoothed the fevered face.
"He does not know my love, my fears,
My toil of heart and hand;
But some day in the after years,
Some day he'll understand;
Some day he'll know
I loved him so;
Some day he'll understand."

A wild lad plays his thoughtless part
  As fits his childhood's lot,
And tramples on his mother's heart
  Ofttimes and knows it not.
He plays among his noisy mates
  Nor knows his truest friend;
His mother sighs, as still she waits:
  "Some day he'll comprehend;
    The day will be
    When he will see;
  Some day he'll comprehend."

The strong youth plays his strenuous part;
  His mother waits alone;
And soon he finds another heart—
  The mate unto his own.
She gives him up in joy and woe;
  He takes his young bride's hand;
His mother murmurs, "Will he know
  And ever understand?
    When will he know
    I love him so?
  When will he understand?"

The strong man fights his battling days,—
  The fight is hard and grim;
His mother's plain, old-fashioned ways
  Have little charm for him.
The dimness falls around her years,
  The shadows 'round her stand,

She mourns in loneliness and tears:
"He'll never understand;
He'll never know
I loved him so;
He'll never understand."

A bearded man of serious years
  Bends down above the dead,
And rains the tribute of his tears
  Over an old gray head.
He stands the open grave above,
  Amid the mourning bands:
And now he knows his mother's love
And now he understands.
    Now doth he know
    She loved him so,
And now he understands.

Sam Walter Foss.

From "Dreams in Homespun,"
Copyright, 1897,
Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co.

THE MOTHER-FAITH

YOURS were the hands that held me first of all,
  Yours were the lips that taught mine own to smile,
Yours were the eyes that watched my every step,
  And yours the heart that showed me Love worth while;
Whatever good men see, in part or whole,
Is but the dear reflection of your soul!

When others laughed at all my dreams, you held
  Those dreams—and me—close to your loving breast,
Giving me strength to try, and when I failed,
  Your faith alone stood firm above the rest.
For you believed some day I would succeed—
The finest spur that any man could need!

And so, to-day, though far from what I've sought,
  The goal unreached, the prize as yet unwon,
Your hands still hold on high Belief and Trust,
  As once they held my baby self—your son.

. . . . . .

The Mother-Faith knows naught of doubt or fear,
But goes serenely on, year after year!

Everard Jack Appleton.

From "The Quiet Courage,"
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Stewart & Kidd Co.

HOME AND MOTHER

"What Is Home Without a Mother?" There's the motto on the wall, hanging in a place obtrusive, where it may be seen by all; and the question's never answered—we can't know what home would be, if its gentle guardian angel in her place no more we'd see. Mother washes all the dishes and she's sweeping up the floors, while the girls are in the parlor doing Paderewski chores; mother's breaking up some kindling at the woodpile by the gate, while the boys are in the garden with their shovels, digging bait; mother's on her knees a-scrubbing, where the careless footprints are, while the father sits in comfort, toiling at a bad

cigar. Mother sits with weary fingers, and with bent and aching head, sewing, darning, for the children while they're all asleep in bed; mother's up before the sunrise, up to labor and to moil, thinking ever of the others, in the weary round of toil. What is home without a mother? That we'll never realize till the light of life has faded from the kind and patient eyes; when the implements of labor fall unheeded from her hand, and the loving voice is silent—then, at last, we'll understand.

Walt Mason.

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and George Matthew Adams.
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THE MOTHER

SURE, an' I'm waitin' to hear but the step av him,
Him that's been gone from us year afther year,
He will come back like the picture I've kep' av him
Smilin' an' gay wid his mirth an' his cheer.
Thrue, they are sayin' it's death that has taken him,
But I know betther that knew him so well,
An' it's meself will be huggin' an' shakin' him
Whin he comes back wid fine sthories to tell.

Whin the wind whistles I think it's the thrill av him
—That was the way he would do whin he came,—
Why do you sit there an' talkin' so ill av him,
Sayin' he's dead? It shud fill ye wid shame;
Yes, I remimber him lyin' here stilly-like,
But he was foolin' ye, women an' men,
'Twas but a prank av him, foolish an' silly-like,
Sure, he'll be back to his mother again.

Whin the door rattles I think, "'Tis the hand av him
Feelin' around fer the latch in the dark,
Whin he comes in I'll be cross an' demand av him
Why he stayed out so late havin' a lark."
So, all the time I am harkin' an' listenin',
Hearin' each step an' each sound in the gloam,
Sure, me old eyes wid the tear drops are glistenin'
Thinkin' how glad I'll be whin he comes home!

Berton Braley.

From "Songs of the Workaday World,"
Copyright, 1915,
George H. Doran Company.

YOUR MOTHER

NOBODY else may ever care because you have a broken heart;
Nobody else, if you should err, may be inclined to take your part;
But she will know, and she will pray
That God may take your woes away;
When all fair weather friends forget, when Fortune turns and smiles no more,
Her faith in you will linger yet, she will be faithful as before.

Nobody else may ever see your native worth, your nobleness;
Nobody else may know, but she will know what talents you possess;
Though others enviously frown,
Or slyly seek to drag you down

She will in word and thought be true, and with sweet
triumph in her breast,
Achieve her rarest blessings through the favors through
which you are blessed.

Nobody else may weep because your dearest plans have
come to naught;
Nobody else might deign to pause, if in sin's meshes you
were caught,
To ask you if you had been to blame,
Or seek to rid you of your shame;
But she would still, with all her heart proclaim your inno-
cence, your worth!
Oh, strive, my boy, to do your part to gladden her brief
days on earth.

S. E. Kiser.

From "The Chicago Record-Herald,"
Permission of the Author.

THE MOTHER WATCH

SHE never closed her eyes in sleep till we were all in bed;
On party nights till we came home she often sat and
read.
We little thought about it then, when we were young and
gay,
How much the mother worried when we children were away.
We only knew she never slept when we were out at night,
And that she waited just to know that we'd come home all
right.

Why, sometimes when we'd stayed away till one or two or
three,
It seemed to us that mother heard the turning of the key;
For always when we stepped inside she'd call and we'd reply,
But we were all too young back then to understand just why.
Until the last one had returned she always kept a light,
For mother couldn't sleep until she'd kissed us all good
night.

She had to know that we were safe before she went to rest;
She seemed to fear the world might harm the ones she loved
the best.
And once she said: "When you are grown to women and to
men,
Perhaps I'll sleep the whole night through; I may be differ-
ent then."
And so it seemed that night and day we knew a mother's
care—
That always when we got back home we'd find her waiting
there.

Then came the night that we were called to gather round
her bed:
"The children all are with you now," the kindly doctor said.
And in her eyes there gleamed again the old-time tender
light
That told she had been waiting just to know we were all
right.
She smiled the old-familiar smile, and prayed to God to keep
Us safe from harm throughout the years, and then she went
to sleep.

Edgar A. Guest.

From "The Path to Home,"
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The Reilly & Lee Co.

THE OLD ARM-CHAIR

I LOVE it! I love it! and who shall dare
To chide me for loving that old arm-chair?
I've treasured it long as a sainted prize;
I've bedewed it with tears and embalmed it with sighs;
'Tis bound by a thousand bands to my heart;
Not a tie will break, not a link will start.
Would you learn the spell? A mother sat there;
And a sacred thing is that old arm-chair.

In childhood's hour I lingered near
The hallowed seat with listening ear;
And gentle words that mother would give,
To fit me to die and teach me to live:
She told me shame would never betide
With truth for my creed, and God for my guide;
She taught me to lisp my earliest prayer,
As I knelt beside that old arm-chair.

I sat and watched her many a day,
When her eyes grew dim and her locks were gray;
And I almost worshipped her when she smiled,
And turned from her Bible to bless her child.
Years rolled on, but the last one sped;
My idol was shattered, my earth star fled;
I learn'd how much the heart can bear,
When I saw her die in that old arm-chair.

'Tis past! 'tis past! but I gaze on it now
With quivering lip and throbbing brow;

'Twas there she nursed me, 'twas there she died,
And memory flows with lava tide.
Say it is folly and deem me weak,
While the scalding drops steal down my cheek;
But I love it! I love it! and cannot tear
My soul from a mother's old arm-chair.

Eliza Cook.

BEAUTIFUL HANDS

SUCH beautiful, beautiful hands!
Not wondrous white nor small,
And you, I know, would scarcely say
That they were fair at all.
I've looked on hands, whose form and hue
A sculptor's dream might be;
Yet are these aged, wrinkled hands
More beautiful to me.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
Though heart were weary and sad,
These patient hands kept toiling on,
That the children might be glad.
And I could weep, as looking back
To childhood's distant day,
I think how these hands rested not,
When mine were at their play.

Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
They're growing feeble now,

For time and pain have left their mark
  On hands and heart and brow.
Alas! alas! the nearing time
  And the lonesome day for me,
When 'neath the grasses, out of sight,
  These hands will folded be.

But far beyond this shadow-land,—
  And many a friend is there—
I know full well, these dear old hands
  Will palms of victory bear!
Where crystal streams, eternally
  Flow over golden sands,
And where the old are young again
  I'll clasp my mother's hands!

Ellen M. Huntington Gates.

From "The Marble House,"
Permission of the author's estate.
G. P. Putnam's Sons.

A BOY'S MOTHER

MY mother she's so good to me,
  Ef I was good as I could be,
I couldn't be as good—no, sir!—
Can't any boy be good as her.

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;
She loves me when I'm good er bad;
An', what's a funniest thing, she says
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see
Her cryin'.—Nen *I* cry; an' nen
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,
An' grabs me up an' pats my head;
An' I hug *her*, an' hug my Pa,
An' love him purt' nigh much as Ma.

James Whitcomb Riley.

From the Biographical Edition
Of the complete works of James Whitcomb Riley,
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THE ROCK-A-BY LADY

THE Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby street
Comes stealing; comes creeping;
The poppies they hang from her head to her feet,
And each hath a dream that is tiny and fleet—
She bringeth her poppies to you, my sweet,
When she findeth you sleeping!

There is one little dream of a beautiful drum—
"Rub-a-dub!" it goeth;
There is one little dream of a big sugar-plum,

And lo! thick and fast the other dreams come
Of popguns that bang, and tin tops that hum,
  And a trumpet that bloweth!

And dollies peep out of those wee little dreams
  With laughter and singing;
And boats go a-floating on silvery streams,
And the stars peek-a-boo with their own misty gleams,
And up, up, and up, where the Mother Moon beams,
  The fairies go winging!

Would you dream all these dreams that are tiny and fleet?
  They'll come to you sleeping;
So shut the two eyes that are weary, my sweet,
For the Rock-a-By Lady from Hushaby street,
With poppies that hang from her head to her feet,
  Comes stealing; comes creeping.

Eugene Field.

From "Poems of Eugene Field,"
Copyright, 1910, by Julia S. Field.
Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE MOTHER

THERE will be a singing in your heart,
  There will be a rapture in your eyes;
You will be a woman set apart,
You will be so wondeful and wise.
You will sleep, and when from dreams you start,
As of one that wakes in Paradise,
There will be a singing in your heart,
There will be a rapture in your eyes.

There will be a moaning in your heart,
There will be an anguish in your eyes;
You will see your dearest ones depart,
You will hear their quivering good-byes.
Yours will be the heart-ache and the smart,
Tears that scald and lonely sacrifice;
There will be a moaning in your heart,
There will be an anguish in your eyes.

There will come a glory in your eyes,
There will come a peace within your heart;
Sitting 'neath the quiet evening skies,
Time will dry the tears and dull the smart.
You will know that you have played your part;
Yours shall be the love that never dies:
You, with Heaven's peace within your heart,
You, with God's own glory in your eyes.

Robert W. Service.

From "Rhymes of a Rolling Stone,"
Dodd, Mead & Co.

MY MOTHER

WHO fed me from her gentle breast,
And hushed me in her arms to rest,
And on my cheek sweet kisses pressed?
My Mother.

When sleep forsook my open eye,
Who was it sang sweet lullaby,
And rocked me that I should not cry?
My Mother.

Who sat and watched my infant head,
When sleeping on my cradle bed,
And tears of sweet affection shed?
My Mother.

When pain and sickness made me cry,
Who gazed upon my heavy eye,
And wept for fear that I should die?
My Mother.

Who dressed my doll in clothes so gay,
And taught me pretty how to play,
And minded all I had to say?
My Mother.

Who ran to help me when I fell,
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the place to make it well?
My Mother.

Who taught my infant lips to pray,
And love God's holy book and day,
And walk in Wisdom's pleasant way?
My Mother.

And can I ever cease to be,
Affectionate and kind to thee,
Who was so very kind to me?
My Mother.

Ah! no, the thought I cannot bear,
And if God please my life to spare,
I hope I shall reward thy care,
My Mother.

When thou art feeble, old, and gray,
My healthy arms shall be thy stay,
And I will soothe thy pains away,
My Mother.

And when I see thee hang thy head,
'Twill be my turn to watch thy bed,
And tears of sweet affection shed,
My Mother.

For God, who lives above the skies,
Would look with vengeance in his eyes,
If I should ever dare despise
My Mother.

Jane Taylor.

MY MOTHER'S BIBLE

THIS book is all that's left me now!
Tears will unbidden start;
With faltering lip and throbbing brow,
I press it to my heart.
For many generations past,
Here is our family tree;
My mother's hands this Bible clasped;
She, dying, gave it me.

Ah! well do I remember those
Whose names these records bear;
Who round the hearthstone used to close,
After the evening prayer,

And speak of what these pages said
In tones my heart would thrill!
Though they are with the silent dead,
Here are they living still!

My father read this holy book
To brothers, sisters, dear;
How calm was my poor mother's look,
Who loved God's word to hear!
Her angel face,—I see it yet!
What thronging memories come!
Again that little group is met
Within the halls of home!

Thou truest friend man ever knew,
Thy constancy I've tried;
When all were false, I found thee true,
My counselor and guide.
The mines of earth no treasures give
That could this volume buy;
In teaching me the way to live,
It taught me how to die!

George Pope Morris.

TO MY MOTHER

THEY tell us of an Indian tree
Which howsoe'er the sun and sky
May tempt its boughs to wander free,
And shoot and blossom, wide and high,
Far better loves to bend its arms
Downward again to that dear earth

From which the life, that fills and warms
  Its grateful being, first had birth.
'Tis thus, though wooed by flattering friends,
  And fed with fame (if fame it be),
This heart, my own dear mother, bends,
With love's true instinct, back to thee!

Thomas Moore.

MOTHERHOOD

I HOLD within my arms to-day
  A priceless bit of mortal clay,
Divinely fashioned, and so fair,
The angels well may kinship share.

My soul with gratitude is filled,
My heart with mother love is thrilled,
My eyes brim o'er with new-born joy,
While gazing on my cherub boy.

O precious one, through tears I see
A mighty task awaiting me.
My happy sky grows overcast,
Life's duties loom so grand, so vast.

To shield from wrong, to right incline,
This little life now linked to mine—
Divine the gift. Oh, may the mould
A heart of truth and honor hold!

Help me, kind Heaven, to know the way
From out the tangle of each day,
To guide him safe to manhood's prime,
And all the glory shall be thine.

M. E. Piatt.

WHAT RULES THE WORLD

THEY say that man is mighty,
He governs land and sea,
He wields a mighty scepter
O'er lesser powers than he;

But mightier power and stronger
Man from his throne has hurled,
For the hand that rocks the cradle
Is the hand that rules the world.

W. R. Wallace.

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

HOW many times, as through the room I hasten,
Without a thought of other days at all,
I lift my eyes, and straightway I am standing
Before her picture, hanging on the wall.

Almost it seems her pleasant voice is calling,
And I am fain to answer, "yes, I hear,
All earthly sounds shall be to me as silence,
If you will speak, O mother, mother dear."

No answer comes, I hush my breath to listen,
But still the eyes with patient, steadfast gaze,
Look into mine; they pierce through flesh and spirit.
I bow my head and blush beneath their rays.

For she is wise with wisdom that appalls me,
The solemn secrets of the grave she knows,
And high above, by God's own hand uplifted,
Through wondrous ways of His own Heaven she goes.

Beyond all change, and safe from time's mutation,
And grieved no more by earth's forlorn complaints,
Thou pictured face, dim semblance of my mother,
How dost thou look among the crownéd saints?

So far! so far! Once, if I faintly called you,
Or laughed, or wept, you were so quick to know;
All else might fail, my mother's love was certain,
Now, dying e'en, your touch I must forego.

Thou there, I here, and I know not what spaces
Beyond the grave's green width divide us two;
Nor of the times unnoticed and unnumbered,
That must go o'er me ere I look on you.

But I am coming, I shall find you, mother;
Sometime, somewhere, when His great will is done,
And I am fit to stand once more beside you,
To your high place I shall have leave to come.

Ellen M. Huntington Gates.

From "The Marble House,"
Permission of the author's estate.
G. P. Putnam's Sons.

HAPPY HE WITH SUCH A MOTHER

YET was there one . . .
Not learnéd, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipped
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who looked all native to her place. . . .
Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and though he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.

Alfred Tennyson.

MY TRUST

A PICTURE memory brings to me:
I look across the years and see
Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
My selfish moods, and know again
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man gray grown,
My childhood's needs are better known,
My mother's chastening love I own.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

A PRAYER

LORD, give the mothers of the world
More love to do their part;
That love which reaches not alone
The children made by birth their own,
But every childish heart.
Wake in their souls true motherhood,
Which aims at universal good.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

THE SECOND MOTHERHOOD

A CHILD was born to me today,
A birth without a throe;
Joy thrills within me, but the pain
Died thirty years ago;
For 'tis the child of him I bore,
And well may he entwine
His dearest hopes about it; still,
'Tis mine, and ever mine.

And I shall comfort all its hurts,
And weep when it is ill,
And know some portion of the grief
A mother knows; but still
The care, the watchful discipline
Through all the years must fall
To other hands—for me such things
Have passed, and love is all.

The child I bore, himself made good
All my distress and pain;
And now the child that comes to me
From heaven is pure gain.—
And his child will be mine. And *his*.
I'll down the ages go
In glad, perpetual motherhood
Through births without a throe.

St. Clair Adams.

WHICH?

WHICH shall it be? Which shall it be?
I looked at John—John looked at me;
Dear, patient John, who loves me yet
As well as though my locks were jet.
And when I found that I must speak,
My voice seemed strangely low and weak:
"Tell me again what Robert said!"
And then I, listening, bent my head.
"This is his letter:"

"'I will give
A house and land while you shall live,
If, in return, from out your seven,
One child to me for aye is given.'"
I looked at John's old garments worn,
I thought of all that John had borne
Of poverty, and work, and care,
Which I, though willing, could not share;
I thought of seven mouths to feed,
Of seven little children's need,
And then of this.

"Come, John," said I,
"We'll choose among them as they lie
Asleep." So walking hand in hand,
Dear John and I surveyed our band.
First to the cradle light we stepped,
Where Lilian the baby slept,
A glory 'gainst the pillow white.
Softly the father stooped to lay
His rough hand down in loving way,
When dream or whisper made her stir,
And huskily he said: "Not her!"

We stooped beside the trundle-bed,
And one long ray of lamp-light shed
Athwart the boyish faces there,
In sleep so pitiful and fair;
I saw on Jamie's rough, red cheek,
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,
"He's but a baby, too," said I,
And kissed him as we hurried by.

Pale, patient Robbie's angel face
Still in his sleep bore suffering's trace:
"No, for a thousand crowns, not him,"
He whispered, while our eyes were dim.

Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son,
Turbulent, reckless, idle one—
Could he be spared? "Nay, He who gave,
Bade us befriend him to the grave;
Only a mother's heart can be
Patient enough for such as he;
And so," said John, "I would not dare
To send him from her bedside prayer."

Then stole we softly up above
And knelt by Mary, child of love.
"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"
I said to John. Quite silently
He lifted up a curl that lay
Across her cheek in willful way,
And shook his head. "Nay, love, not thee,"
The while my heart beat audibly.

Only one more, our eldest lad,
Trusty and truthful, good and glad—
So like his father. "No, John, no—
I can not, will not let him go."
And so we wrote in courteous way,
We could not drive one child away.
And afterward, toil lighter seemed,
Thinking of that of which we dreamed;
Happy, in truth, that not one face
We missed from its accustomed place;
Thankful to work for all the seven,
Trusting the rest to One in heaven!

Ethel Lynn Beers.

MOTHERLESS

MY mother was a Florentine,
Whose rare blue eyes were shut from seeing me
When scarcely I was four years old; my life,
A poor spark snatched up from a failing lamp
Which went out therefore. She was weak and frail;
She could not bear the joy of giving life—

The mother's rapture slew her. If her kiss
Had left a longer weight upon my lips,
It might have steadied the uneasy breath,
And reconciled and fraternized my soul
With a new order. As it was, indeed,
I felt a mother-want about the world,
And still went seeking, like a bleating lamb
Left out at night, in shutting up the fold,—
As restless as a nest-deserted bird
Grown chill through something being away, though what
It knows not. I, Aurora Leigh, was born
To make my father sadder, and myself
Not overjoyous, truly. Women know
The way to rear up children (to be just),
They know a simple, merry, tender knack
Of tying sashes, fitting baby-shoes,
And stringing pretty words that make no sense,
And kissing full sense into empty words;
Which things are corals to cut life upon,
Although such trifles: children learn by such
Love's holy earnest in a pretty play,
And get not over-early solemnized,—
But seeing, as in a rose-bush, Love's Divine,
Which burns and hurts not,—not a single bloom,—
Become aware and unafraid of Love.
Such good do mothers. Fathers love as well
—Mine did, I know,—but still with heavier brains,
And wills more consciously responsible,
And not as wisely, since less foolishly;
So mothers have God's license to be missed.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

POOR MOTHER

WHEN Mother was a little girl,
Now many years ago,
She had to mind her P's and Q's,
She had to walk just so;
And if her mother said, "Be quiet!"
She didn't dare say "Booh!"
For fear they'd send her off to bed,—
Without her supper, too.

When Mother grew to womanhood,
And got her children, then
She found the fashion turned around,—
She had to mind again:
To-day it's Margaret, Jean, and Jane
Who do the talking, and
Poor Mother doesn't dare say "Booh!"
Except upon command.

William Wallace Whitelock.

O MOTHER, MOTHER DEAR

SINCE you were tired and went away
We've brought you flowers every day;
Now through your grass live daisies peer,
O mother, mother dear!

They say you are not very far,
But since we cry we know you are;
We should not cry if you were near,
O mother, mother dear!

Mother, you know we sometimes cry
In the dark night, we don't know why;
You would not let us cry for fear,
O mother, mother dear!

We think perhaps you did not know
Your little children loved you so,
Or you would not have left them here,
O mother, mother dear!

If we are good we think that then
Perhaps you will come back again;
Come in a week—a month—a year,
O mother, mother dear!

O mother, mother, come to-day!
Why did you ever go away?
We are so tired of being here
Without you, mother dear!

E. Nesbit Bland.

MOTHERHOOD

NO woman can except by motherhood
Be beautiful; the others may in face
Be fair or pretty and in form may trace
An idle pleasure to the eye, but should
One look for full attaining of the good
That comes from having filled the destined place
That mothers shall bear children for the race,
Then is her inner beauty understood.

Hers is a soul that's purified by pain;
She knows that mothers close to death have trod;
She has a courage warriors ne'er attain—
Her love becomes akin to that of God.
All others are like roses that are fair
But when they fade they have left nothing there.

Joseph Morris.

MOTHER, NEVER MOURN

I'D a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
Oh, the touching sight
Makes me still to weep—
Of my little lad,
Soon to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in Heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh, it did not burn!

He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turned about,
"Your tears put it out;
Mother, never mourn."

William Barnes.

"SHE MADE HOME HAPPY"

"SHE made home happy!" these few words I read
Within a churchyard, written on a stone;
No name, no date, the simple words alone,
Told me the story of the unknown dead.
A marble column lifted high its head
Close by, inscribed to one the world has known;
But ah! that lonely grave with moss o'ergrown
Thrilled me far more than his who armies led.

"She made home happy!" through the long, sad years,
The mother toiled and never stopped to rest,
Until they crossed her hands upon her breast,
And closed her eyes, no longer dim with tears.
The simple record that she left behind
Was grander than the soldier's, to my mind.

Henry Coyle.

MATERNAL GRIEF

DEPARTED Child! I could forget thee once
Though at my bosom nursed; this woeful gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced
By the returning substance, seen or touched,
Seen by my eyes, or clasped in my embrace.

Absence and death how differ they! and how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore
What one short sigh so easily removed?—
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!

The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth
Not unvouchsafed—a light that warmed and cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind
Which, in her own blest nature, rooted deep,
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded,—beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years,
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.

Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate Creatures in their several gifts
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,
Their starts of motion and their fits of rest,
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit
Of rejoicing morning were their own?

Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate; for oft-times from the sound
Of the survivor's sweetest voice (dear child,
He knew it not) and from his happiest looks
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with fear
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy where'er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Faint color over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered; and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields; and when the glare of day
Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary is the lost One's grave,

Which he with flowers had planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss
Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart,
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

William Wordsworth.

THE GLASSES AND THE BIBLE

"WHERE are my glasses?" she would call;
"I've left them somewhere; run and find them."
Aware where 'twas she used them most,
I knew the Bible had enshrined them.
And sure enough, tucked safe away
In what seemed Scriptural morasses
They lay; the print just underneath
Looked larger through my mother's glasses.

I'm old now, and my outlook's changed;
My boyhood notions and convictions
Have been discarded, been enlarged,
Been modified with queer restrictions.

But something at the core abides;
My faith, though shrunk each year that passes,
Yet breathes, yet lives. The Book of Books
Looks larger through my mother's glasses.

St. Clair Adams.

TO MY MOTHER

DEAL gently with her, Time; these many years
Of life have brought more smiles with them than tears.
Lay not thy hand too harshly on her now,
But trace decline so slowly on her brow
That (like a sunset of the Northern clime,
Where twilight lingers in the summer-time,
And fades at last into the silent night,
Ere one may note the passing of the light)
So may she pass—since 'tis the common lot—
As one who, resting, sleeps and knows it not.

John Allen Wyeth.

AN ANCIENT TOAST

At a festal gathering in the age of chivalry each of the knights, except St. Leon, had pledged his lady fair, and now it was his turn to speak.

ST. LEON raised his kindling eye,
And lifted sparkling cup on high.
"I drink to one," he said,
"Whose image never may depart,
Deep graven on this grateful heart,
Till memory be dead;

"To one whose love for me shall last
When lighter passions long have passed,
So holy 'tis, and true;
To one whose love hath longer dwelt,
More deeply fixed, more keenly felt,
Than any pledged by you!"

Each guest upstarted at the word,
And laid a hand upon his sword,
With fiery flashing eye;
And Stanley said: "We crave the name,
Proud knight, of this most peerless dame,
Whose love you count so high."

St. Leon paused, as if he would
Not breathe her name in careless mood,
Thus lightly to another;
Then bent his noble head, as though
To give that name the reverence due,
And gently said—"My Mother!"

Anonymous.

CHILD OF A DAY

CHILD of a day, thou knowest not
The tears that overflow thine urn,
The gushing eyes that read thy lot,
Nor, if thou knewest, couldst return.
And why the wish! the pure and blest
Watch like thy mother o'er thy sleep.
O peaceful night! O envied rest!
Thou wilt not ever see her weep.

Walter Savage Landor.

MOTHER

(*From "Snow-Bound."*)

OUR mother, while she turned her wheel
Or run the new-knit stocking-heel,
Told how the Indian hordes came down
At midnight on Cocheco town,
And how her own great-uncle bore
His cruel scalp-mark to fourscore.
Recalling, in her fitting phrase,
So rich and picturesque and free,
(The common unrhymed poetry
Of simple life and country ways,)
The story of her early days,—
She made us welcome to her home;
Old hearths grew wide to give us room;
We stole with her a frightened look
At the gray wizard's conjuring-book,
The fame whereof went far and wide
Through all the simple country side;
We heard the hawks at twilight play,
The boat-horn on Piscataqua,
The loon's weird laughter far away;
We fished her little trout-brook, knew
What flowers in wood and meadow grew,
What sunny hillsides autumn-brown
She climbed to shake the ripe nuts down,
Saw where in sheltered cove and bay
The ducks' black squadron anchored lay,
And heard the wild-geese calling loud
Beneath the gray November cloud.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

THE JUSTIFIED MOTHER OF MEN.

BEHOLD a woman!
She looks out from her Quaker-cap—her face is clearer
and more beautiful than the sky.
She sits in an arm-chair, under the shaded porch of the farm-
house,
And the sun just shines on her old white head.

Her ample gown is of cream-hued linen:
Her grandsons raised the flax and her granddaughters spun
it with the distaff and wheel.

The melodious character of the earth,
The finish beyond which philosophy cannot go, and does not
wish to go,
The justified mother of men.

Walt Whitman.

THE MOTHER'S HYMN

"*Blessed art thou among women.*"

LORD who ordainest for mankind
Benignant toils and tender cares,
We thank thee for the ties that bind
The mother to the child she bears.

We thank Thee for the hopes that rise
Within her heart, as, day by day,
The dawning soul, from those young eyes,
Looks with a clearer, steadier ray.

And grateful for the blessing given
With that dear infant on her knee,
She trains the eye to look to heaven,
The voice to lisp a prayer to Thee.

Such thanks the blessed Mary gave
When from her lap the Holy Child,
Sent from on high to seek and save
The lost of earth, looked up and smiled.

All-Gracious! grant to those who bear
A mother's charge, the strength and light
To guide the feet that own their care
In ways of Love and Truth and Right.

William Cullen Bryant.

THE IMMORTALITY OF LOVE

OH! when a mother meets on high
The Babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,
For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight?

Robert Southey.

SLEEP ON, SWEET MOTHER

SLEEP on, my mother! sweet and innocent dreams
Attend thee, best and dearest! Dreams that gild
Life's clouds like setting suns, with pleasures filled,
And saintly joy, such as thy mind beseems,—

Thy mind where never stormy passion gleams
  Where their soft nest the dovelike virtues build;
And calmest thoughts, like violets distilled,
  Their fragrance mingle with bright wisdom's beams.

Sleep on, sweet mother! not the lily's bell
  So sweet; not the enamored west wind's sighs
  That shake the dewdrop from her snowy cell
So gentle, not that dewdrop ere it flies
  So pure. E'en slumber loves with thee to dwell,
  O model most beloved of good and wise.

Mary Russell Mitford.

MOTHERHOOD

GRAY gloomed the hillside. Through the solemn hush
  Of dole, the third dark hour—reluctant, shamed—
Slow yielded to its close.
  Below the cross
The Holy Mother knelt in quivering calm
Her waiting arms in anguish upward reached
To take again her Son, her little boy,—
Her baby!—while, pale through the mystic dusk
Her lifted face in adoration dwelt
Upon her Lord.
  Then near at hand there broke
A woman's sobbing, low and wretched and fierce,
The cry of one whose hurt is worse than death;
And Mary, bending sweet within her veil,
Laid her high grief aside to pray, "Dear God,
Ah, comfort Thou the mother of the thief!"

Edith Brownell.

From "The Independent."

THE WIDOW'S MITE

A WIDOW,—she had only one!
A puny and decrepit son;
But, day and night,
Though fretful oft, and weak and small,
A loving child, he was her all,—
The Widow's Mite.

The Widow's Mite—aye, so sustain'd,
She battled onward, nor complain'd
Though friends were fewer:
And while she toil'd for daily fare,
A little crutch upon the stair
Was music to her.

I saw her then, and now I see
That, though resign'd and cheerful, she
Has sorrow'd much:
She has,—He gave it tenderly,—
Much faith, and, carefully laid by,
A little crutch.

Frederick Locker-Lampson.

CHILDREN

CHILDREN are what the mothers are.
No fondest father's fondest care
Can fashion so the infant heart
As those creative beams that dart,
With all their hopes and fears, upon
The cradle of a sleeping son.

His startled eyes with wonder see
A father near him on his knee,
Who wishes all the while to trace
The mother in his future face;
But 'tis to her alone uprise
His waking arms; to her those eyes
Open with joy and not surprise.

Walter Savage Landor.

BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

IF you have a gray-haired mother
In the old home far away,
Sit you down and write the le' er
You put off from day to day.
Don't wait until her weary steps
Reach Heaven's pearly gate,
But show her that you think of her,
Before it is too late.

If you have a tender message,
Or a loving word to say,
Don't wait till you forget it,
But whisper it to-day.
Who knows what bitter memories
May haunt you if you wait?
So make your loved one happy
Before it is too late.

The tender word unspoken,
The letters never sent,
The long forgotten messages,
The wealth of love unspent;

For these some hearts are breaking,
For these some loved ones wait;
Show them that you care for them
Before it is too late.

George Bancroft Griffith.

THREE THINGS

THREE things there be that nearly break my heart:
The thought of Christmas and my mother's part
In all its sweetness; the soft prayer she said
And I beside her ready for my bed;
And her last kiss at night. Woe's me, alone
Here waiting, waiting—and my mother gone!

Christopher Bannister.

TO A CHILD EMBRACING HIS MOTHER.

LOVE thy mother, little one!
Kiss and clasp her neck again—
Hereafter she may have a son
Will kiss and clasp her neck in vain.
Love thy mother, little one!

Gaze upon her living eyes,
And mirror back her love for thee,—
Hereafter thou mayst shudder sighs
To meet them when they cannot see.
Gaze upon her living eyes!

Press her lips the while they glow
  With love that they have often told,—
Hereafter thou mayst press in woe,
  And kiss them till thine own are cold.
Press her lips the while they glow!

Oh, revere her raven hair!
  Although it be not silver-gray—
Too early Death, led on by Care,
  May snatch save one dear lock away.
Oh, revere her raven hair!

Pray for her at eve and morn,
  That Heaven may long the stroke defer;—
For thou mayst live the hour forlorn
  When thou wilt ask to die with her.
Pray for her at eve and morn!

Thomas Hood.

WOMAN AND ARTIST

I THOUGHT to win me a name—
  Should ring in the ear of the world—
How can I work with small pink fists
  About my fingers curled?

Then adieu to name and to fame.
  They scarce are worth at the best
One touch of this wet little, warm little mouth,
  With its lips against my breast.

Alice Williams Brotherton.

MOTHERS

MOTHERS are just the queerest things!
'Member when John went away,
All but mother cried and cried,
When they said good-bye that day.
She just talked and seemed to be
Not the slightest bit upset—
Was the only one who smiled!
Others' eyes were streaming wet.

But when John came back again,
On a furlough safe and sound,
With a medal for his deeds
And without a single wound,
While the rest of us hurrahed,
Laughed and joked and danced about,
Mother kissed him, then she cried—
Cried and cried like all git out!

Edwin L. Sabin.

AS AT THY PORTALS ALSO DEATH

AS at thy portals also death,
Entering thy sovereign. dim, illimitable grounds,
To memories of my mother, to the divine blending, maternity,
To her buried and gone, yet buried not, gone not from me,
(I see again the calm benignant face fresh and beautiful still,
I sit by the form in the coffin,
I kiss and kiss convulsively again the sweet old lips, the cheeks, the closed eyes in the coffin;)

To her, the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all of earth,
life, love, to me the best,
I grave a monumental line, before I go, amid these songs,
And set a tombstone here.

Walt Whitman.

TO MY MOTHER

AND canst thou, Mother, for a moment think
That we thy children, when old age shall shed
Its blanching honors on thy weary head,
Could from our best of duties ever shrink?
Sooner the sun from his high sphere should sink
Than we, ungrateful leave thee in that day,
To pine in solitude thy life away,
Or shun thee, tottering on the grave's cold brink.
Banish the thought!—where'er our steps may roam,
O'er smiling plains, or wastes without a tree,
Still will fond memory point our hearts to thee,
And paint the pleasures of thy peaceful home;
While duty bids us all thy griefs assuage,
And smooth the pillow of thy sinking age.

Henry Kirke White.

CLING TO THY MOTHER

CLING to thy mother; for she was the first
To know thy being, and to feel thy life;
The hope of thee through many a pang she nurst;
And when, midst anguish like the parting strife,
Her babe was in her arms, the agony
Was all forgot, for bliss of loving thee.

Be gentle to thy mother; long she bore
  Thine infant fretfulness and silly youth;
Nor rudely scorn the faithful voice that o'er
  Thy cradle pray'd, and taught thy lispings truth.
Yes, she is old; yet on thine adult brow
She looks, and claims thee as her child e'en now.

Uphold thy mother; close to her warm heart
  She carried, fed thee, lull'd thee to thy rest;
Then taught thy tottering limbs their untried art,
  Exulting in the fledging from her nest;
And now her steps are feeble, by her stay,
Whose strength was thine in thy most feeble day.

Cherish thy mother; brief perchance the time
  May be that she will claim the care she gave;
Past are her hopes of youth, her harvest prime
  Of joy on earth; her friends are in the grave;
But for her children, she could lay her head
Gladly to rest among her precious dead.

Be tender with thy mother; words unkind,
  Or light neglect from thee, will give a pang
To that fond bosom, where thou art enshrined
  In love unutterable, more than fang
Of venom'd serpent. Wound not that strong trust
As thou wouldst hope for peace when she is dust.

O mother mine! God grant I ne'er forget,
  Whatever be my grief, or what my joy,

The unmeasured, inextinguishable debt
I owe thy love; but make my sweet employ
Ever through thy remaining days to be
To thee as faithful, as thou wert to me.

George W. Bethune.

A MAN'S DEBT

I TOAST the mother with the hallowed features,
Most blessèd one of all created creatures!
What man achieves he owes to woman's care—
A sweet wife's love or saintly mother's prayer.

Fred Emerson Brooks.

BACK TO MOTHER'S ARMS

SILENT and lone, silent and lone!
Where, tell me where are my little ones gone?
There are no little faces to wash to-night,
No little troubles for mother to right,
No little blue eyes to be sung to sleep,
No little playthings to be put up to keep,
No little garments to hang on the rack,
No little tales to tell, no nuts to crack,
No little trundle-beds brimful of rollick,
Calling for mamma to settle the frolic,
No little soft lips to press me with kisses—
Oh! such a sad, lonely evening as this is;
No little voices to shout with delight,
"Good night, dear mamma, good night, good night."

Silent the house is, no little ones here,
To startle a smile or chase back a tear.

Silent and lone, silent and lone!
Where, tell me where are my little ones gone?
It seemeth but yesterday since they were young;
Now they are all scattered the world's paths among;
Out where the great rolling tide-stream is flowing,
Out where new firesides with love-light are glowing,
Out where the graves of their life-hopes are sleeping,
Not to be comforted,—weeping, still weeping,
Out where the high hills of science are blending,
Up mid the cloud-rifts—up, up, still ascending,
Seeking the sunshine that rests on the mountain;
Drinking and thirsting still, still at the fountain;
Out in life's thoroughfare, all of them moiling,
Out in the wide world, striving and toiling,
Little ones, loving ones, playful ones all,
That went when I bade and came at my call,
Have you deserted me? Will you not come
Back to your mother's arms, back to the home?

Frances D. Gage.

HALF-WAKING

I THOUGHT it was the little bed
I slept in long ago;
A straight white curtain at the head,
And two smooth knobs below.

I thought I saw the nursery fire,
  And in a chair well-known
My mother sat, and did not tire
  With reading all alone.

If I should make the slightest sound
  To show that I'm awake,
She'd rise, and lap the blankets round,
  My pillow softly shake;

Kiss me and turn my face to see
  The shadows on the wall,
And then sing "Rousseau's Dream" to me
  Till fast asleep I fall.

But this is not my little bed;
  That time is far away:
With strangers now I live instead,
  From dreary day to day.

William Allingham.

MOTHER TO SON

BEFORE I knew the love of man
  The lovely dream of you began.
When I said, "Jesus meek and mild,"
My Jesus was a little child.
I nursed the kitten on my knee,
And nursed you where no eye could see.
When I grew up to woman's grace
I saw you in your father's face,
Your hands were beating at my breast,
And gave my womanhood no rest,

Your little soul called each to each,
And laid bright heaven in our reach.
My body fed your body, son,
But birth's a swift thing, swiftly done,
Compared to one-and-twenty years
Of feeding you with spirit's tears.
I could not make your mind and soul,
But my glad hands have kept you whole,
And tears have kept God's pastures green,
And washed the temple sweet and clean.
Think you that I have lived in vain
These years of wonder, joy, and pain?
The years when Jesus meek and mild
Was my beloved little child!
And when the first shy touch of things
Waked in my heart a thousand springs,
And bade me open childhood's gate
And give my woman's hand to fate!
The moment when your groping hands
Bound me to life with ruthless bands,
When all my living became a prayer,
And all my days built up a stair
For your young feet that trod behind,
That you an aspiring way should find!
Think you that life can give you pain,
Which does not stab in me again?
Think you that life can give you pleasure
Which is not my undying treasure?
Think you that life can give you shame
Which does not make my pride go lame?

And you can do no evil thing
Which sears not me with poisoned sting.
Because of all that I have done,
Remember me in life, O son!
Keep that proud body fine and fair,
My love is monumented there.
For my love make no woman weep,
For my love hold no woman cheap,
And see you give no woman scorn
For that dark night when you were born.
Beloved, all my years belong
To you, go thread them for a song.

Irene Rutherford McLeod.

From "Songs to Save a Soul,"
B. W. Huebsch.

TO MY MOTHER

A MOTHER heard our infant cries,
And folded us with fond embrace,
And when we woke, our infant eyes
Were opened on a mother's face.

Our wishes she did make her own,
Her bosom fed and pillowed too,
Answering each start or fitful moan
With trembling pulses fond and true.

Then knowledge was a thing untaught:
Heaven's charity, a daily dole,
Stole in inaudibly, and wrought
Its gentle bonds about the soul.

Charles Tennyson Turner.

OLD MOTHERS

I LOVE old mothers—mothers with white hair,
And kindly eyes, and lips grown softly sweet,
With murmured blessings over sleeping babes.
There is a something in their quiet grace
That speaks the calm of Sabbath afternoons;
A knowledge in their deep, unfaltering eyes,
That far outreaches all philosophy.

Time, with caressing touch, about them weaves
The silver-threaded fairy-shawl of age,
While all the echoes of forgotten songs
Seemed joined to lend a sweetness to their speech.

Old mothers!—as they pass with slow-timed step,
Their trembling hands cling gently to youth's strength.
Sweet mothers! As they pass, one sees again,
Old garden walks, old roses, and old loves.

Charles S. Ross.

MOTHER

WHEN she undid her hair at night,
About the time for lying down,
She came and knelt. I was so small,
There in my bed, her curls did fall
All over me, light gold and brown.

I fell asleep amid her prayers.
  Her fair young face (far off it seems),
Her girlish voice, her kisses sweet,
The patter of her busy feet,
  Passed with me into charming dreams.

And when I woke at merry morn,
  Through her gold hair I saw the sun
Flame strong, shine glad, and glorify
The great, good world. Oh, never can I
  Forget her words, "My darling one!"

Ah! checkered years since then have crept
  Past her and me, and we have known
Some sorrow and much tempered joy.
Far into manhood stands her boy,
  And her gold hair snow-white has grown.

The world has changed by slow degrees,
  And as old days recede, alas!
So much of trouble have the new,
Those rare, far joys grow dim, seen through
  Sad times as through a darkened glass.

But just this morning when I woke,
  How lovingly my lips were kissed!
How chaste and clear the sunlight shone
On mother's hair, like gold-dust sown
  Athwart thin clouds of silver mist!

Anonymous.

CARING FOR ONE'S MOTHER

TO rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky!

Alexander Pope.

SUBMISSION

(*Translated from Heine.*)

I HAVE been wont to bear my head right high,
My temper too is somewhat stern and rough;
Even before a monarch's cold rebuff
I would not timidly avert mine eye.
Yet, mother dear, I'll tell it openly:
Much as my haughty pride may swell and puff,
I feel submissive and subdued enough
When thy much cherished, darling form is nigh.
Is it thy spirit that subdues me then,
Thy spirit, grasping all things in thy ken,
And soaring to the light of heaven again?
By the sad recollection I'm oppressed
That I have done so much that grieves thy breast,
Which loved me, more than all things else, the best.

Edgar Alfred Bowring.

MY GIFT TO YOU

THE finest fibers of my life—
A gift from that above—
I weave around your soul, my babe,
With threads of tender love.

Life's alabaster-box I break,
And pour upon your head,
That the perfume of sacrifice
May through your being spread.

And though you wander far in sin,
Still true my heart shall beat,
And even then your mother's prayer
Shall tangle 'round your feet.

Dennis H. Stovall.

From "The Mother's Magazine,"
David Cook Co.

MAMMA!

MY own mamma!
My dear mamma!
How happy I shall be,
To-morrow night,
At candle-light,
When she comes home to me.

To-morrow night
At candle-light,—
Yes, that's the time, they say,
That she'll be here
Our mother dear,—
How long she's been away,

'Tis just a week,
Since on my cheek
She pressed the parting kiss;
It seems like two,—
I never knew
So long a week as this.

My tangled hair
She smoothed with care,
With water bathed my brow;
And all with such
A gentle touch,—
There's none to do so now.

I cannot play
When she's away;
There's none to laugh with me;
And much I miss
The tender kiss,—
The seat upon her knee.

When up to bed
I'm sorrowing led,
I linger on the stairs;
I lie and weep
I cannot sleep—
I scarce can say my prayers.

But she will come,
She'll be at home
To-morrow night, and then
I hope that she
Will never be
So long away again.

Anna M. Wells.

LINKS WITH HEAVEN

OUR God in Heaven from that holy place
To each of us an angel guide has given;
But Mothers of dead children have more grace,—
For they give angels to their God and Heaven.

How can a Mother's heart feel cold or weary
Knowing her dearer self safe, happy, warm?
How can she feel her road too dark or dreary
Who knows her treasure sheltered from the storm?

How can she sin? Our hearts may be unheeding,
Our God forgot, our holy saints defied;
But can a mother hear her dead child pleading,
And thrust those little angel hands aside?

Those little hands stretched down to draw her ever
Nearer to God by mother love:—we all
Are blind and weak, yet surely she can never,
With such a stake in Heaven, fail or fall!

She knows that when the mighty Angels raise
Chorus in Heaven, one little silver tone
Is hers forever, that one little praise,
One little happy voice, is all her own.

Ah, saints in Heaven may pray with earnest will
And pity for their weak and erring brothers;
Yet there is prayer in Heaven more tender still,—
The little Children pleading for their Mothers.

Adelaide A. Procter.

AN OLD PICTURE

THROUGH many a year a picture dear
Hung just above my bed;
It plainly showed a shady road
That, curving gently, led
Past shrub and tree, till I could see,
Beside a blossoming vine,
My mother stand, as once she stood
When she was young, and I was good,
In days all sun and shine.

I saw her there, so sweet and fair,
When I drove off to school;
I knew the bliss of her fond kiss
On that deep porch and cool;
And every night the blessèd sight
Of her above my bed
Consoled me for the boyish woes
Of absence—comforted I rose
When my brief prayer was said,—

The little prayer she taught me there
As I knelt in the room
Beside her knee, while I could see
The twining vine in bloom;
And every night in that dim light
I clambered o'er my bed
To kiss the picture and kiss her,
As she'd kissed her small traveller
Leaving the old homestead.

The change and strife of later life,
  The years that leave me gray,
Have taken, too, that pictured view;
  But cannot take away
The memory so dear to me,
  That fond and wistful joy:
There stands my home, and mother's there,
So young, so good, so sweet and fair,
  And I'm her little boy.

Oliver Marble.

TIRED MOTHERS

A LITTLE elbow leans upon your knee,
  Your tired knee that has so much to bear;
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
  From underneath a thatch of tangled hair.
Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
  Of warm, moist fingers, folding yours so tight;
You do not prize this blessing overmuch,—
  You almost are too tired to pray to-night.

But it is blessedness! a year ago
  I did not see it as I do to-day—
We are so dull and thankless; and too slow
  To catch the sunshine till it slips away.
And now it seems surpassing strange to me,
  That, while I wore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
  The little child that brought me only good.

And if some night when you sit down to rest,
You miss this elbow from your tired knee,—
This restless curling head from off your breast,—
This lisping tongue that chatters constantly;
If from your own the dimpled hands had slipped,
And ne'er would nestle in your palm again;
If the white feet into the grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heartache then.

I wonder so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gown;
Or that the footprints, when the days are wet,
Are ever black enough to make them frown.
If I could find a little muddy boot,
Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor,—
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear it patter in my house once more,—

If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky,
There is no woman in God's world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.
But ah! the dainty pillow next my own
Is never rumpled by a shining head;
My singing birdling from its nest has flown,—
The little boy I used to kiss is dead!

Mary Riley Smith.

WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER?

WHAT is home without a mother?
What are all the joys we meet?
When her loving smile no longer
Greets the coming of our feet?
The days are long, the nights are drear,
And time rolls slowly on;
And oh, how few are childhood's pleasures,
When her loving care is gone.

Alice Hawthorne.

WHAT THE MOTHERS DO

PRAYING for the little people
(Closed are eyes of brown and blue),
By the quiet bedside kneeling
With a trustful, sure appealing;
All the Spirit's guidance needing,
Seeking it with earnest pleading—
This is what the mothers do.

Parting from the little people
(Heart of mine how fast they grew!)
Fashioning the wedding dresses,
Treasuring the last caresses;
Waiting then as years fly faster
For the summons of the Master—
This is what the mothers do.

Mary L. C. Robinson.

THE UNBORN

THOU art my very own,
A part of me;
Bone of my bone
And flesh of my flesh.
And thou shalt be
Heart of my heart
And brain of my brain
In years that are to come to me and thee.

Before thou wast a being made
Of spirit as of flesh,
Thou didst sleep beneath the beats
Of my tumultuous heart, and drink
With little aimless lips
And blind, unseeing eyes,
From every bursting vein
Replete with life's abundant flood.

Ay! even of my very breath
And from my blood
Thou didst imbibe the fresh
And glorious air that holds the sweets
Of nature's sure and slow eclipse,
That ceaseless round of life and death,
Which are the close entwined braid
Of all the season's subtle mesh
And endless chain.

In a soft silken chamber set apart,
Here just beneath my happy heart,
Thou didst lie at dreamy ease
While all my being paid
Its tribute unto thee.
What happy hours for thee and me!
As when a bird
Broods on its downy nest,
So would I sit
And watch the flit
Of idle shadows to and fro,
And brood upon my treasure hid
Within my willing flesh.
And when there stirred
A little limb—a tiny hand!—
What thrills of ecstasy
Shook all my being to its inmost citadel!
Ah! none but she who has borne
A child beneath her breast may know
What wondrous thrill and subtle spell
Comes from this wondrous woven band
That binds a mother to her unborn child
Within her womb.

As in the earth,
That fragrant tomb
Of all that lives, or man or beast,
Soft blossoms bud and bloom and swell,
So didst thou from my body gain
Sweet sustenance and royal feast.
Then through the gates of priceless pain

Thou comest to me—fair—so fair
And so complete,
From rose-tipped feet
To silken hair!
And then beneath each pearly lid
There glowed a jewel—passing rare!
It moves—and breathes. It slakes its thirst
At my all-abundant breast!
Oh, moment born of life—of love!
Oh, rapture of all earth's high, high above!
Three lives in one,
By loving won.
My own—and thine—
Oh, bond divine!
Our little child! Our little child!

Julia Neely Finch.

KISS THE DEAR OLD MOTHER

KISS the dear old mother, her cheek is wan and wasted,
Feeble are the footsteps that once were light and gay;
Many a bitter cup of sorrow she has tasted,
Borne unnumbered trials since her wedding day.
Think of all the hours that she is sad and lonely,
All her vanished pleasures living o'er again;
Cheerful and contented will she be if you will only
Kiss the dear old mother now and then.

In your childish troubles she was always near you;
Oh, her very presence had a power to bless!

Striving as a mother can to calm and cheer you,
With her loving kisses and her soft caress.
When the fever heat within your veins was burning,
Cooling was the touch of her hand upon your brow;
Never from your poisoned breath and kisses turning,—
Do you ever kiss your mother now?

She is old and wrinkled; not a trace of beauty
Lingers in the outlines of her face and form;
Yet at sight of her, oh! what sweet thoughts of duty
And of fond affection in your heart should swarm.
For the comfort given in your hours of trial,
For the love exceeding power of tongue or pen,
Let her aching heart grieve not at Love's denial,
Kiss the dear old mother now and then.

When by Fame and Fortune you are proudly knighted,
Let the dear old mother enter in your joy;
See the agèd pilgrim trembling and delighted,
At the world's opinion of her boy!
Think of all you owe her; seek to give her pleasure,
Spite of cruel sneers from cold or careless men;
While within your keeping you hold this precious treasure,
Kiss the dear old mother now and then.

Josephine Pollard.

THE LOST CHILD

'TWAS on the balmy day
Set for the sports aquatic
And people lounged about
In multitudes chaotic

When rising from her brood,
In accents frantic, thrilly,
An ancient woman cried:
"Where's Willie? Oh, where's Willie?"

From all that concourse vast
A groan rose as men pondered
What frightful things befall
A helpless child that's wandered.
It might in forests stray,
Or for a water-lily
Reach out its hand, and fall.
Wild eyes looked round for Willie.

Then, as from out the deep
A vast whale heaves its shoulder,
Rose from the throng a man
Full forty years or older
Who weighed two hundred pounds.
He looked uncommon silly
As out he called, "I'm here—
I'm here, ma." It was Willie.

St. Clair Adams.

HER FIRST-BORN

IT was her first sweet child, her heart's delight:
And, though we all foresaw his early doom,
We kept the fearful secret out of sight;
We saw the canker, but she kiss'd the bloom.
And yet it might not be: we could not brook
To vex her happy heart with vague alarms,

To blanch with fear her fond intrepid look,
Or send a thrill through those encircling arms.
She smil'd upon him, waking or at rest:
She could not dream her little child would die:
She toss'd him fondly with an upward eye:
She seem'd as buoyant as a summer spray,
That dances with a blossom on its breast,
Nor knows how soon it will be borne away.

Charles Tennyson Turner.

MOTHER AND SON

BRIGHTLY for him the future smiled,
The world was all untried;
He had been a boy, almost a child,
In your household till he died.

And you saw him young and strong and fair
But yesterday depart;
And you now know he is lying there
Shot to death through the heart!

Alas, for the step so proud and true
That struck on the war-path's track;
Alas, to go, as he went from you,
And to come, as they brought him back!

One shining curl from that bright young head,
Held sacred in your home,
Is all that you have to keep in his stead
In the years that are to come.

You may claim of his beauty and his youth
  Only this little part—
It is not much with which to stanch
  The wound in a mother's heart!

It is not much with which to dry
  The bitter tears that flow;
Not much in your empty hands to lie
  As the seasons come and go.

Yet he has not lived and died in vain,
  For proudly you may say
He has left a name without a stain
  For your tears to wash away.

And evermore shall your life be blest,
  Though your treasures now are few,
Since you gave for your country's good the best
  God ever gave to you!

Phœbe Cary.

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

A MONTH, sweet little ones, is past
  Since your dear mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessed tidings! thought of joy!
The eldest heard with steady glee:
Silent he stood; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, "Mother, come to me!"

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near;
"Nay, patience! patience, little boy!
Your tender mother cannot hear."

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And answers back his sister's glee:
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done,—
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where the two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,
Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all "since mother went away!"

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

—But see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'Tis gone—and in a merry fit
They run up stairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood,
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past—and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

Dorothy Wordsworth.

BIRTH

JUST when each bud was big with bloom,
And as prophetic of perfume,
When spring, with her bright horoscope,
Was sweet as an unuttered hope;

Just when the last star flickered out
  And twilight, like a soul in doubt,
Hovered between the dark and dawn,
  And day lay waiting to be born;

Just when the gray and dewy air
  Grew sacred as an unvoiced prayer,
And somewhere through the dusk she heard
  The stirring of a nested bird—

Four angels glorified the place:
  Wan Pain unveiled her awful face;
Joy, soaring sang; Love brooding, smiled;
  Peace laid upon her breast a child.

Annie R. Stillman.

A MOTHER'S PICTURE

SHE seemed an angel to our infant eyes!
  Once, when the glorifying moon revealed
Her who at evening by our pillow kneeled—
Soft-voiced and golden-haired, from holy skies
Flown to her loves on wings of Paradise—
We looked to see the pinions half-concealed.
The Tuscan vines and olives will not yield
Her back to me, who loved her in this wise,
And since have little known her, but have grown
To see another mother, tenderly,
Watch over sleeping darlings of her own;
Perchance the years have changed her; yet alone
This picture lingers: still she seems to me
The fair, young Angel of my infancy.

Edmund Clarence Stedman.

HIS MOTHER'S KISS

IT was her wont when, tired of play,
He to her bosom crept,
With golden hair in disarray,
To kiss him as he slept.
And still her plea would be but this:
"I shall not wake him with a kiss!"

So heavenly-sweet his sleeping face—
So beautiful and bright,
I know the angels lift the lace
To kiss my boy good-night!
For still he smiles in dreams of bliss:
"How should I wake him with a kiss?"

So did his mother say; and when
God whispered His sweet will,
She only moaned: "He sleeps!" and then,
Kneeling, she kissed him still.
And weeping, murmured only this:
"I can not wake him with a kiss!"

Frank L. Stanton.

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"The Atlanta Constitution."

THE REASON

ONCE I asked my mother why she wa'n't a boy like me,
So she could grow to be a man and sail upon the sea,
And be a famous Commodore and have a lot of ships;
"I would rather be your mother," and her love was on her lips.

David Stearns.

HYMN FOR THE MOTHER

MY child is lying on my knees;
The signs of heaven she reads;
My face is all the heaven she sees,
Is all the heaven she needs.

And she is well, yea, bathed in bliss,
If heaven is in my face,—
Behind it is all tenderness
And truthfulness and grace.

I mean her well so earnestly,
Unchanged in changing mood;
My life would go without a sigh
To bring her something good.

I also am a child, and I
Am ignorant and weak;
I gaze upon the starry sky,
And then I must not speak;

For all behind the starry sky,
Behind the world so broad,
Behind men's hearts and souls doth lie
The Infinite of God.

Ay, true to her, though troubled sore,
I cannot choose but be:
Thou who art peace forevermore
Art very true to me.

If I am low and sinful, bring
  More love where need is rife;
Thou knowest what an awful thing
  It is to be a life.

Hast thou not wisdom to enwrap
  My waywardness about,
In doubting safety on the lap
  Of Love that knows no doubt?

Lo! Lord, I sit in thy wide space,
  My child upon my knee;
She looketh up into my face,
  And I look up to thee.

George Macdonald.

SAIL EAST, SAIL WEST

SAIL east, sail west, O wanderer,
  In east, in west, you cannot see
Such suns as rise and set in these
  Four little faces round my knee.

Sail east, sail west, dear wanderer!
  God cares for you and cares for me;
He knows for which of us 'twas best
  To stay with children round her knee.

Helen Hunt Jackson.

IF WE KNEW

IF we knew the baby's fingers
  Pressed against the window-pane,
Would be cold and stiff to-morrow,—
  Never trouble us again:
Would the bright eyes of our darling
  Catch the frown upon our brow?
Would the prints of rosy fingers
  Vex us then as they do now?

Ah, these little ice-cold fingers,
  How they point our memories back
To the hasty words and actions
  Strewn along our backward track!
How those little hands remind us,
  As in snowy grace they lie,
Not to scatter thorns, but roses,
  For our reaping by and by!

Mary Riley Smith.

THE ABSENT ONES

HALF the long night, my children, I lie waking
  Till the dawn rustles in the old thorn tree,
Then dream of you, while the red morn is breaking
  Beyond that broad salt sea;
In this poor room, where many a time the measure
  Of your low, regular breathing in mine ear,
Brought to my listening heart a keener pleasure
  Than any music clear;

Here, where your soft heads in my bosom laying,
Ye nestled, with your hearts to my heart pressed;
And I have felt your little fingers playing,
All night, around my breast.

How could ye leave me? Did ye think a mother
Was natured like a bird in summer's prime,
Who leaves her young brood, hopeful of another
In the next glad spring time?

Cecil Frances Alexander.

SOME MOTHER

SOME mother loves them no matter how far
They drift from the one who was her child;
Her faith is steadfast and firm as a star,
Though they by the world are shunned and reviled.

Despised is that outcast whose home's the street,
More ragged his character than his clothes,
Too low to resent the sneers he will meet—
But his boyhood dreams some mother knows.

That criminal there whose life must pay
For some heinous deed that he has done
Once romped at innocent, care-free play—
Some mother's heart dies with her son.

That harlot bold with inviting leer,
Who offers her perfumed body so cheap,
In the long ago when the dusk grew near
Crawled into some mother's lap to sleep.

The failures who lose with Life their throw,
The cowards who quail, the weaklings who fall,
The wrecks that sink into the undertow—
Some mother somewhere loves them all.

Joseph Morris.

MY PLACE IN CHILDHOOD

THERE was a place in childhood, that I remember well,
And there a voice of sweetest tone, bright fairy tales did tell,
And gentle words, and fond embrace, were given with joy to me,
When I was in that happy place upon my mother's knee.

When fairy tales were ended, "good-night," she softly said,
And kissed and laid me down to sleep upon my tiny bed,
And holy words she taught me there; methinks I yet can see
Her angel eyes, as close I knelt beside my mother's knee.

In the sickness of my childhood, the perils of my prime,
The sorrows of my riper years, the cares of every time,
When doubt and danger weigh me down, then pleading all for me,
It was a fervent prayer to Heaven that bent my mother's knee.

Samuel Lover.

THE MOTHER

GOD thought to give the sweetest thing
In His almighty power
To earth; and deeply pondering
What it should be,—one hour

In fondest joy and love of heart
Outweighing every other,
He moved the gates of Heaven apart
And gave to earth—a mother!

G. Newell Lovejoy.

NATURE

AS a fond mother, when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed,
Half-willing, half-reluctant to be led,
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Nor wholly reassured and comforted
By promises of others in their stead,
Which though more splendid may not please him more:

So Nature deals with us, and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wish to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know.

Henry W. Longfellow.

IN EVERY HOME

MADONNAS hallow every home;
O'er every roof where babies are
Shines high and pure a guiding star;
And mother hearts do always hear
Diviner music ringing clear.
And peace and love, good will on earth,
Are born with every baby's birth. *Anonymous.*

I AM TO HAVE A CHILD

I AM to have a child. Flesh of my flesh,
Soul of my soul, and love of earthly love!
In marvel of thanksgiving do I kneel
To pledge that coming life to God above.

The throbbing of my pulse shall live anew;
Where I have stumbled she shall firmly tread;
Where sin has dimmed my vision she shall see;
Of my night's darkness she shall know no dread.

In valleys my path led, but when I bear
My Baby-one aloft no sight shall mar
Her view beyond the hills where beauties lie
That I see now, because I came afar.

Wonder of wonders! Life that gives increase,
Spring to the winter and a child to me!
Within the Future's pool I see a face
Like to my own—as God would have it be.

Edith Livingston Smith.

MATERNITY

WITHIN the crib that stands beside my bed
A little form in sweet abandon lies
And as I bend above with misty eyes
I know how Mary's heart was comforted.

O world of Mothers! blest are we who know
The ecstasy—the deep God-given thrill
That Mary felt when all the earth was still
In the Judean starlight long ago!

Anne P. L. Field.

MOTHER TO CHILD

HOW best can I serve thee, my child! my child!
Flesh of my flesh, and dear heart of my heart!
Once thou wast within me—I held thee, I fed thee;
By the force of my loving and longing I led thee—
Now we are apart!

I may blind thee with kisses, and crush with embracing,
Thy warm mouth in my neck and our arms intertwining;
But here in my body my soul lives alone,
And thou answerest me from a house of thine own—
That house which I builded!

Which we builded together, thy father and I;
In which thou must live, O my darling, and die!
Not one stone can I alter, one atom allay—
Not to save or defend thee, or help thee to stay—
That gift is completed!

How best can I serve thee? O child, if they knew
How my heart aches with loving! How deep and how true,
How brave and enduring, how patient, how strong,
How longing for good, and how fearful of wrong
Is the love of thy mother!

Could I crown thee with riches; surround, overflow thee
With fame and with power till the whole world should know thee;
With wisdom and genius to hold the world still,
To bring laughter and tears, joy and pain at thy will—
Still, *thou* mightst not be happy.

Such have lived and in sorrow. The greater the mind,
The wider and deeper the grief it can find;
The richer, the gladder, the more thou canst feel
The keen stings that a lifetime is sure to reveal.
O my child! must thou suffer?

Is there no way my life can save thine from a pain?
Is the love of a mother no possible gain?
No labor of Hercules—search for the Grail—
No way for this wonderful love to avail?
God in Heaven! O teach me!

My prayer has been answered. The pain thou must bear
Is the pain of the world's life which thy life must share.
Thou art one with the world—though I love thee the best;
And to save thee from pain I must save all the rest.
Well, with God's help I'll do it!

Thou art one with the rest; I must love thee in them.
Thou wilt sin with the rest, and thy mother must stem
The world's sin. Thou wilt weep, and thy mother must dry
The tears of the world, lest her darling should cry.
I will do it—God helping!

And I stand not alone. I will gather a band
Of all loving mothers from land unto land.
Our children are part of the world! do ye hear?
They are one with the world, we must hold them all dear.
Love all for the child's sake!

For the sake of my child I must hasten to save
All the children on earth from the jail and the grave.
For so, and so only, I lighten the share
Of the pain of the world that my darling must bear—
Even so, and so only!

Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

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From "In This Our World,"
Small, Maynard & Co.

A PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

A PARTNERSHIP with God is motherhood;
What strength, what purity, what self-control,
What love, what wisdom should belong to her
Who helps God fashion an immortal soul.

Anonymous.

THE CROWN OF WOMANHOOD

I AM a Mother!—that, and no other,
Lying in peace with my babe at my breast;
All my fears banished, all my pain vanished;
Happy—and numbered at last with the blest!

Here, at my bosom, I nourish a blossom,
Fairest of flowers—and mine, mine alone!
How I yearned for thee long ere I bore thee—
Thee, little baby, now come to thine own!

Ah, my sweet dearest, thou 'st brought me nearest
To Heaven a mortal may be 'neath the sun:
I am a Mother—that, and no other!
Here is the crown of my womanhood won!

Frances Viola Holden.

THE MIRACLE

CLOSE-HUNG with silence was the darkened room;
Through starlit distances there came to earth
A thread from off God's never-ceasing loom;
And mortals knew—the miracle of birth.

Anonymous.

MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

O THAT those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine,—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails, else how distinct they say,
"Grieve not, my child; chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes
(Blest be the art that can immortalize,—
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it!) here shines on me still the same.
  Faithful remembrancer of one so dear!
O welcome guest though unexpected here!
Who bidst me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey,—not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief,—
Shall steep me in Elysian revery,
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,—
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah! that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell tolled on the burial day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such?—It was.—Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more.
Thy maidens, grieve themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return;
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived,—
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.
Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more;
Children not thine have trod my nursery floor;
And where the gardener Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,—
Delighted with my bawble coach, and wrapped
In scarlet mantle warm and velvet capped—

'Tis now become a history little known
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes, less deeply traced:
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou mightst know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,—
The biscuit, or confectionery plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheeks bestowed
By thy own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed,—
All this, and, more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love that knew no fall,—
Ne'er roughened by those cataracts and breaks
That humor interposed too often makes;
All this still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so till my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee as my numbers may,—
Perhaps a frail memorial, but sincere,—
Not scorned in heaven, though little noticed here.

Could Time, his flight reversed, restore the hours
When playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers,—
The violet, the pink, the jassamine,—
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while—
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile,)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?

I would not trust my heart,—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might—
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,
That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

Thou—as a gallant bark, from Albion's coast,
(The storms all weathered and the ocean crossed,)
Shoots into port at some well-havened isle,
Where spices breathe and brighter seasons smile:
There sits quiescent on the floods, that show
Her beauteous form reflected clear below,
While airs impregnated with incense play
Around her, fanning light her streamers gay,—
So thou, with sails how swift! hast reached the shore
"Where tempests never beat nor billows roar,"
And thy loved consort on the dangerous tide
Of life long since has anchored by thy side.
But me, scarce hoping to attain that rest,
Always from port withheld, always distressed,—
Me howling blasts drive devious, tempest-tossed,
Sails ripped, seams opening wide, and compass lost;
And day by day some current's thwarting force
Sets me more distant from a prosperous course.
Yet O, the thought that thou art safe, and he!—
That thought is joy, arrive what may to me.
My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,—
The son of parents passed in to the skies.

And now, farewell!—Time, unrevoked, has run
His wonted course; yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again,—
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine;
And, while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft,—
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

William Cowper.

WHEN BARREN DOUBT

WHEN barren doubt, like a late coming snow,
Made an unkind December of my spring,
That all the pretty flowers did droop for woe,
And the sweet birds their love no more would sing;
Then the remembrance of thy gentle faith,
Mother beloved, would steal upon my heart;
Fond feeling saved me from the utter scathe,
And from the hope I could not live apart.

Arthur Henry Hallam.

TWO MOTHERS

A WOMAN walking the street adown
Saw at a casement, glint the gown
Of a mother, meek, whose little son
Had died with his child-joys just begun,
And it smote her heart, for well she knew
What Mother-love with a life may do;

And she said, "Poor soul! how sad that she
Should lose the child in his grace and glee!"
For she thought of *her* boy that lived to-day,
Though man-grown now and far away.

But the woman there in the window-seat
Looked with a smile, not sad, but sweet,
And touched with pity, to the place
Where she had marked the other's face;
And she said, "Poor soul! her child is lost,
For now he is only a man sin-tossed!
But the boy I watched in his bright young day,
He bides in my heart a child for aye."

Richard Burton.

MOTHER'S LOVE

HE sang so wildly, did the Boy,
That you could never tell
If 'twas a madman's voice you heard,
Or if the spirit of a bird
Within his heart did dwell:
A bird that dallies with his voice
Among the matted branches;
Or on the free blue air his note
To pierce, and fall, and rise, and float,
With bolder utterance launches.
None ever was so sweet as he,
The boy that wildly sang to me;
Though toilsome was the way and long,
He led me not to lose the song.

But when again we stood below
The unhidden sky, his feet
Grew slacker, and his note more slow,
But more than doubly sweet.
He led me then a little way
Athwart the barren moor,
And then he stayed and bade me stay
Beside a cottage door;
I could have stayed of mine own will,
In truth, my eye and heart to fill
With the sweet sight which I saw there,
At the dwelling of the cottager.

A little in the doorway sitting,
The mother plied her busy knitting,
And her cheek so softly smiled,
You might be sure, although her gaze
Was on the meshes of the lace,
Yet her thoughts were with her child.
But when the boy had heard her voice,
As o'er her work she did rejoice,
His became silent altogether,
And slyly creeping by the wall
He seiz'd a single plume, let fall
By some wild bird of longest feather;
And all a-tremble with his freak,
He touched her lightly on the cheek.

Oh, what a loveliness her eyes
Gather in that moment's space,
While peeping round the post she spies
Her darling's laughing face!

Oh, mother's love is glorifying,
On the cheek like sunset lying;
In the eyes a moisten'd light,
Softer than the moon at night!

Thomas Burbidge.

IT NEVER DIES

IT never dies,—a mother's love
Strengthens with every ill that may betide;
In every phase of life its waters move
With current strong, and fathomless, and wide.
From the heart oft other flames may rise,
And while they seem as warm and grand and high,
The incense of one lives to reach the skies,—
A mother's tender love can never die.

E. O. Jewell.

THE HOME KEEPER

ABOUT her household moving glad each day,
With heartful care of all the simplest things;
And near her side a child voice coos and sings—
She hears the noise of pattering feet at play,
And pauses oft to kiss the lips that say
"Mother!" and joys to feel the hand that clings
Close to her heart, as to her apron strings—
Nor would she chide that little hand away!

Then, when the day hath drifted to the dark,
And brightening stars loom through the twilight late
She feels the heart within her bosom stir

At every leaf that strikes the lattice. . . . Hark!
Her life's reward—a footstep at the gate,
And love that comes to claim the love of her!

Frank L. Stanton.

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"The Atlanta Constitution."

TRAVELERS

I LIKE to meet a gray Ulysses
Who's wandered o'er this marvelous globe
And faced such scenes of bane and bliss, he's
Arrayed in wisdom—'tis his robe.
He may not tell me what this nation,
That hazard wild, to him has taught;
Yet gleams from him some intimation
Of what in his deep soul's inwrought.

I know one wiser still from travel
Who's ranged beyond the utmost star,
Who can (if any can) unravel
The meanings of the things that are.
Why 'tis that joys and woes so leaven
Our fitful days, her words ne'er tell;
But any mother has crooned in heaven,
And every mother has walked through hell.

St. Clair Adams.

MOTHER AND POET

DEAD! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
And one of them shot in the west by the sea,
Dead! both my boys! When you sit at the feast
And are wanting a great song for Italy free,
Let none look at *me!*

Yet I was a poetess only last year,
And good at my art, for a woman, men said;
But *this* woman, *this*, who is agoniz'd here,
—The east sea and west sea rhyme on in her head
Forever instead.

What art can a woman be good at? Oh, vain!
What art *is* she good at, but hurting her breast
With the milk-teeth of babes, and a smile at the pain?
Ah boys, how you hurt! you were strong as you pressed
And I proud, by that test.

What art's for a woman? To hold on her knees
Both darlings; to feel all their arms round her throat,
Cling, strangle a little, to sew by degrees
And 'broider the long-clothes and neat little coat;
To dream and to dote.

To teach them . . . It stings there! I made them indeed
Speak plain the word *country*. I taught them, no doubt,
That a country's a thing men should die for at need.
I prated of liberty, rights, and about
The tyrant cast out.

And when their eyes flashed . . . O my beautiful eyes! . . .
I exulted; nay, let them go forth at the wheels
Of the guns, and denied not. But then the surprise
When one sits quite alone! Then one weeps, then one kneels!
God, how the house feels!

At first, happy news came, in gay letters moil'd
With my kisses,—of camp-life and glory, and how
They both lov'd me; and, soon coming home to be spoil'd,
In return would fan off every fly from my brow
With their green laurel-bough.

Then was triumph at Turin: "Ancona was free!"
And some one came out of the cheers in the street,
With a face pale as stone, to say something to me.
My Guido was dead! I fell down at his feet,
While they cheer'd in the street.

I bore it; friends sooth'd me; my grief look'd sublime
As the ransom of Italy. One boy remain'd
To be leant on and walk'd with, recalling the time
When the first grew immortal, while both of them strain'd
To the height he had gain'd.

And letters still came, shorter, sadder, more strong,
Writ now but in one hand, "I was not to faint,—
One lov'd me for two—would be with me ere long:
And *Viva l'Italia!*—*he* died for, our saint,
Who forbids our complaint."

My Nanni would add, "he was safe, and aware
Of a presence that turn'd off the balls,—was impress'd
It was Guido himself, who knew what I could bear,
And how 'twas impossible, quite dispossess'd,
To live on for the rest."

On which without pause, up the telegraph-line,
Swept smoothly the next news from Gaeta:—*Shot.*
Tell his mother. Ah, ah, "his," "their" mother,—not
"mine,"
No voice says "*My* mother" again to me. What!
You think Guido forgot?

Are souls straight so happy that, dizzy with Heaven,
They drop earth's affections, conceive not of woe?
I think not. Themselves were too lately forgiven
Through that Love and Sorrow which reconcil'd so
The Above and Below.

O Christ of the five wounds, who look'st through the dark
To the face of Thy Mother! consider I pray,
How we common mothers stand desolate, mark,
Whose sons, not being Christs, die with eyes turn'd away,
And no last word to say!

Both boys dead? but that's out of nature. We all
Have been patriots, yet each house must always keep
one.
'Twere imbecile, hewing out roads to a wall;
And, when Italy's made, for what end is it done
If we have not a son?

Ah, ah, ah! when Gaeta's taken, what then?
When the fair wicked queen sits no more at her sport
Of the fire-balls of death crashing souls out of men?
When the guns of Cavalli with final retort
Have cut the game short?

When Venice and Rome keep their new jubilee,
When your flag takes all heaven for its white, green,
and red,
When *you* have your country from mountain to sea,
When King Victor has Italy's crown on his head,
(And I have my Dead)—

What then? Do not mock me. Ah, ring your bells low,
And burn your lights faintly! *My* country is *there*,
Above the star prick'd by the last peak of snow:
My Italy's *there*, with my brave civic Pair,
To disfranchise despair!

Forgive me. Some women bear children in strength,
And bite back the cry of their pain in self-scorn;
But the birth-pangs of nations will wring us at length
Into wail such as this—and we sit on forlorn
When the man-child is born.

Dead! One of them shot by the sea in the east,
And one of them shot in the west by the sea,
Both! both my boys! If in keeping the feast,
You want a great song for your Italy free,
Let none look at *me*.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

MOTHER'S LOVE

THERE is no Love like a Mother's—
'Tis the Sun that shineth forth;
There is no Truth like a Mother's—
'Tis the Star that points the North;

There is no Hope like a Mother's—
'Tis the April in the clod;
There is no Trust like a Mother's—
'Tis the Charity of God:
The Love and Truth, the Hope and Trust
That make the mortal more than dust.

John Jarvis Holden.

WISHING

RING-TING! I wish I were a Primrose,
A bright yellow Primrose blowing in the spring!
The stooping boughs above me,
The wandering bee to love me,
The fern and moss to creep across,
And the Elm-tree for our king!

Nay—stay! I wish I were an Elm-tree,
A great lofty Elm-tree, with green leaves gay!
The winds would set them dancing,
The sun and moonshine glance in,
The birds would house among the boughs,
And sweetly sing!

Oh—no! I wish I were a Robin.
A Robin or a little Wren, everywhere to go;
Through forest, field or garden,
And ask no leave or pardon,
Till winter comes with icy thumbs
To ruffle up our wing!

Well—tell! Where should I fly to,
Where go to sleep in the dark wood or dell?
Before a day was over,
Home comes the rover,
For mother's kiss,—sweeter this
Than any other thing!

William Allingham.

A MOTHER'S LOVE

A MOTHER'S love!
If there be one thing pure,
Where all beside is sullied,
That can endure,
When all else passes away;
If there be aught
Surpassing human deed or word, or thought,
It is a mother's love.

Marchioness de Spadara.

MATER AMABILIS

DOWN the goldenest of streams,
Tide of dreams,
The fair cradled man-child drifts;
Sways with the cadenced motion slow,
To and fro,
As the mother-foot poised lightly, falls and lifts.

He, the firstling,—he, the light
Of her sight,—
He, the breathing pledge of love,

'Neath the holy passion lies,
Of her eyes,—
Smiles to feel the warm, life-giving ray above.

She believes that in his vision,
Skies elysian
O'er an angel-people shine.
Back to gardens of delight,
Taking flight,
His auroral spirit basks in dreams divine.

But she smiles through anxious tears;
Unborn years
Pressing forward, she perceives.
Shadowy muffled shapes, they come
Deaf and dumb,
Bringing what? dry chaff and tares, or full-eared sheaves?

What for him shall she invoke?
Shall the oak
Bind the man's triumphant brow?
Shall his daring foot alight
On the height?
Shall he dwell amidst the humble and the low?

Through what tears and sweat and pain,
Must he gain
Fruitage from the tree of life?
Shall it yield him bitter flavor?
Shall its savor
Be as manna midst the turmoil and the strife?

In his cradle slept and smiled
Thus the child
Who as Prince of Peace was hailed.
Thus anigh the mother breast,
Lulled to rest,
Child-Napoleon down the lilied river sailed.

Crowned or crucified—the same
Glows the flame
Of her deathless love divine.
Still the blessed mother stands,
In all lands,
As she watched beside thy cradle and by mine.

Whatso gifts the years bestow,
Still men know,
While she breathes, lives one who sees
(Stand they pure or sin-defiled)
But the child
Whom she crooned to sleep and rocked upon her knees.

Emma Lazarus.

IN THE NIGHT WATCHES

SLEEP visits not my eyelids; yet I rest
In a content more deep than any sleep;
Nay, rapt in joy my vigil here I keep,
With trembling hands clasped to my eager breast.

For one I love, after long hours of pain,
Sleeps near me now. Think you that I could sleep,
Though needless now the vigil that I keep,
With the dread lifted from my heart and brain?

Think you that I would sleep?—would be beguiled,
Cheated of this, my joy? Nay, let me fast
From sleep through long, glad hours, to hear at last
The low, soft breathing of my ailing child.

Alice Wellington Rollins.

A REMEMBRANCE

THE voices of the Loved and Lost are stirring at my heart,
And memory's misered treasures leap to life, with sudden start—

Thou art looking, smiling on me, as thou hast looked and smiled, Mother,
And I am sitting at thy side, at heart a very child, Mother!

I'm with thee now in soul, sweet Mother, much as in those hours,
When all my wealth was in thy love, and in the birds and flowers.

And by these holy yearnings, by these eyes sweet tears wet,
I know there wells a spring of love through all my being yet.

Gerald Massey.

MY MOTHER

THERE was a gather'd stillness in the room:
Only the breathing of the great sea rose
From far off, aiding that profound repose,
With regular pulse and pause within the gloom

Of twilight, as if some impending doom
Was now approaching;—I sat moveless there,
Watching with tears and thoughts that were like prayer,
Till the hour struck,—the thread dropp'd from the loom;
And the Bark pass'd in which freed souls are borne.
The dear still'd face lay there; that sound forlorn
Continued; I rose not, but long sat by:
And now my heart oft hears that sad sea-shore,
When she is in the far-off land, and I
Wait the dark sail returning yet once more.

William Bell Scott.

SEND THEM TO BED WITH A KISS

O MOTHERS, so weary, discouraged,
Worn out with the cares of the day,
You often grow cross and impatient,
Complain of the noise and the play;
For the day brings so many vexations,
So many things going amiss;
But, mothers, whatever may vex you,
Send the children to bed with a kiss!

The dear little feet wander often,
Perhaps, from the pathway of right,
The dear little hands find new mischief
To try you from morning till night;
But think of the desolate mothers
Who'd give all the world for your bliss,
And, as thanks for your infinite blessings,
Send the children to bed with a kiss.

For some day their noise will not vex you,
  The silence will hurt you far more;
You will long for their sweet childish voices
  For a sweet childish face at the door;
And to press a child's face to your bosom,
  You'd give all the world for just this!
For the comfort 'twill bring you in sorrow,
  Send the children to bed with a kiss!

Anonymous.

A TOAST

LET us drink with a will to the Maidens,
  Who make for us paradise;
Let us drink to the gold of their tresses,
To the blue of their wondering eyes.
And now, when the toasting is ended,
Let us forthwith the goblet refill,
And drink to the Mothers! God bless them!
Come: a toast and a drink—with a will!

Marie Beatrice Gannon.

HER MOTHER

(From "An Order for a Picture")

A LADY, the loveliest ever the sun
  Looked down upon you must paint for me:
Oh, if I only could make you see
  The clear blue eyes, the tender smile,
The sovereign sweetness, the gentle grace,

The woman's soul, and the angel's face
That are beaming on me all the while,
I need not speak these foolish words:
Yet one word tells you all I would say,—
She is my mother: you will agree
That all the rest may be thrown away.

Alice Cary.

A MOTHER'S HEART

NEVER was prideful wealth, power, or fame
That glanced not back beyond its haughtiness
With tenderest longing and a welling eye
Unto those earlier days, when a clear flame
Burned steadfast on the hearth of home, to bless
A past that knew no pomp, to smile and sigh
Wistfully for that better, finer part:
The unselfishness that is a mother's heart.

Christopher Bannister.

MOTHER'S LOVE

WHAT is there down so deep
But mother's love will find it?
Cover it over and hide it well,
Neither with lips, nor by glances tell;
Have you a trouble? Wherever it dwell,
Mother's love finds it out.

What is there up so high,
But mother's love can share it?
All that is noble, and good and true,—

That which enriches and blesses you,—
What you accomplish, and purpose to do;
Mother's love shares it all.

Is anything too hard
For mother to do for you?
No, obstacles vanish, and cares grow light,
Dangers diminish, and clouds become bright,
Burdens grow small, and roll out of sight
For mother when doing for you.

Anonymous.

TO MY MOTHER

YOUR form is dim; your hands, your brow, your face
Are lost, and only some elusive grace
Remains of you for memory to prize:—
A fluttering bit of lace,
A ribbon—oh, the past is pitiless
And will not yield you to my aching eyes!
Is this forgetfulness?

Mother, not so! For your escape is of
The body, not the spirit, and my love
Holds you—forgotten—intimately sweet,
And precious far above
The need of flesh to keep remembrance true.
Forgotten?—Ah, my very pulses beat
In memory of you!

Mary Sinton Leitch.

Permission of the Author.
From "The Waggon and the Star,"
B. J. Brimmer Co.

EARTH'S GREATEST CHARMS

GOD made the streams that gurgle down the purple
mountain side;
He made the gorgeous coloring with which the sunset's dyed.
He made the hills and covered them with glory; and He
made
The sparkle on the dewdrops and the flecks of light and
shade.
Then, knowing all earth needed was a climax for her
charms,
He made a little woman with a baby in her arms.

He made the arching rainbow that is thrown across the sky;
He made the blessed flowers that nod and smile as we go by;
He made the gladsome beauty as she bows with queenly
grace;
But, sweetest of them all, He made the love-light in the face
That bends above a baby, warding off the world's alarms—
That dainty little woman with her baby in her arms.

A soft pink wrap, embellished with a vine in silken thread;
A filmy snow-white cap upon a downy little head;
A dress, 'twould make the winter drift look dusty by its
side;
Two cheeks, with pure rose-petal tint, two blue eyes wonder-
wide;
And, bending o'er, that mother face embued with heaven's
own charms—
God bless the little woman with her baby in her arms!

Anonymous.

A MOTHER'S BREAST

WHEN among all life's miracles I try
What highest arguments may certify
That God is good, however things may seem,
On this I rest, and evil dims like dream,—
Each little soul that voyages toward birth,
When it arrives on earth,
Makes gentlest landfall on a mother's breast.

William C. Gannett.

THANKSGIVING AFTER CHILDBIRTH

WOMAN! the Power who left his throne on high,
And deigned to wear the robe of flesh we wear,
The Power that thro' the straits of Infancy
Did pass dependent on maternal care,
His own humanity with Thee will share,
Pleased with the thanks that in his People's eye
Thou offerest up for safe Delivery
From Childbirth's perilous throes. And should the Heir
Of thy fond hopes hereafter walk inclined
To courses fit to make a mother rue
That ever he was born, a glance of mind
Cast upon this observance may renew
A better will; and, in the imagined view
Of thee thus kneeling, safety he may find.

William Wordsworth.

THE YOUNG MOTHER

FROM what strange journey am I safe returned,
So wearied, yet content;
These eyes still darkened with the mists of Death,
All strength and courage spent,
Yet with such strange, sweet stirring in my breast—
Such rapture, Heaven-sent.

Shrinking, I left broad day and took the road
Which led me close to Death,
But curved about me were strong Angel wings
Defying his chill breath
As I snatched up my Joy and homeward drew,
Knowing Love conquereth.

Key Cammack.

From "The American Magazine."

TO MY FIRST LOVE, MY MOTHER

SONNETS are full of love, and this my tome
Has many sonnets: so here now shall be
One sonnet more, a love sonnet, from me
To her whose heart is my heart's quiet home,
To my first Love, my Mother, on whose knee
I learnt love-lore that is not troublesome;
Whose service is my special dignity,
And she my lodestar while I go and come.

And so because you love me, and because
I love you, Mother, I have woven a wreath
Of rhymes wherewith to crown your honored name:
In you not fourscore years can dim the flame
Of love, whose blessed glow transcends the laws
Of time and change and mortal life and death.

Christina G. Rossetti.

LET THE LITTLE ONES COME UNTO ME

IT was long ago that He uttered
This message so tender and sweet,
And women were crowding about Him
And laying their babes at His feet.
He looked with a gentle compassion
On the mothers who knelt at His knee,
And He comforted them with this saying,
"Let the little ones come unto Me."

From over the hills of Judea,
Down through the long line of the years,
That voice of ineffable sweetness
Still comforts the mother's sad tears.
O Heart that has bled for our sorrows,
O Voice that can quiet the sea!
Come often to me with Thy whisper:
"Let the little ones come unto Me."

O mothers, whose children are lying
Out under the snow and the rain,
Let the beautiful words of the Master
Give ease to your sorrow and pain!

He holds the bright heads on His bosom,
He gathers them close to His knee,
And tenderly still He is saying,
"Let the little ones come unto Me."

Mary Riley Smith.

HAVE YOU WRITTEN TO MOTHER?

PRAY may I ask you, worthy lad,
Whose smile no care can smother,
Though busy life throbs round about,
Have you written home to mother?

You are forgetting, aren't you, quite,
How fast the weeks went flying;
And that a little, blotted sheet,
Unanswered still is lying?

Don't you remember how she stood,
With wistful glance at parting?
Don't you remember how the tears
Were in her soft eyes starting?

Have you forgotten how her arm
Stole round you to caress you?
Have you forgotten those low words:
"Good-by, my son, God bless you"?

Oh! do not wrong her patient love;
Save God's, there is no other
So faithful through all mists of sin;
Fear not to write to mother.

Tell her how hard it is to walk,
As walked the Master, lowly;
Tell her how hard it is to keep
A man's life pure and holy.

Tell her to keep the lamp of prayer,
A light, a beacon burning;
Whose beams shall reach you far away,
Shall lure your soul returning.

Tell her you love her dearly still,
For fear some sad to-morrow
Shall bear away the listening soul,
And leave you lost in sorrow.

And then through bitter, falling tears,
And sighs you may not smother,
You will remember when too late
You did not write to mother.

Jane Ronalson.

MOTHER'S LOVE

BY her my lisping tongue in prayer
Was taught to bless the God of light,
Her kindness soothed my childish care,
And watched my slumbers during night.
Poor is the immortal sculptor's art,
The painter's pencil, poet's song,
Compared to her who moulds the heart
With plastic hand while pure and young.

A sister's love is warm and kind,
A brother's strong as hand of time;
And sweet the love of kindred mind,
But mother, these are not like thine.
Dear mother, from thy home above,
Still come and bless me with thy love.

John S. Reid.

THE SONG OF THE OLD MOTHER

I RISE in the dawn, and I kneel and blow
Till the seed of the fire flicker and glow.
And then I must scrub, and bake, and sweep,
Till stars are beginning to blink and peep;
But the young lie long and dream in their bed
Of the matching of ribbons, the blue and the red,
And their day goes over in idleness,
And they sigh if the wind but lift up a tress.
While I must work, because I am old
And the seed of the fire gets feeble and cold.

William Butler Yeats.

MATER DOLOROSA

BECAUSE of one low-laid head all crowned
With golden hair,
Forevermore all fair young brows to me
A halo wear;
I kiss them reverently. Alas! I know
The pain I bear.

Because of dear, but close-shut holy eyes
Of heaven's own blue,
All little eyes do fill my own with tears—
Whate'er their hue;
And motherly I gaze their innocent
Clear depths into.

Because of little pallid lips which once
My name did call,
No childish voice in vain appeal, upon
My ears doth fall;
I count it all my joy their joys to share
And sorrows small.

Because of little dimpled hands
Which folded lie,
All little hands henceforth to me do have
A pleading cry;
I clasp them as they were small wandering birds
Lured home to fly.

Because of little death-cold feet, for earth's
Rough roads unmeet,
I'd journey leagues to save from sin or harm
Such little feet,
And count the lowliest service done for them
So sacred—sweet!

Mrs. M. E. Paull.

MOTHER

THE noblest thoughts my soul can claim,
The holiest words my tongue can frame,
Unworthy are to praise the name
More sacred than all other.
An infant, when her love first came—
A man, I find it just the same;
Reverently I breathe her name,
The blessed name of mother.

George Griffith Fetter.

MOTHERHOOD

O GOD, I know his sins are red,
That it were better he were dead;
But was't not thou, O Lord, hast said
Out of thy master mercy: "Though
Thy sins be scarlet," Lord, I know—
"They shall be made as white as snow"?

Then hear me—hear! For, oh, I pray
Through all the night and all the day
Since ever that he went away—
Pray as I seek him in the street
Amid the myriad tramping feet
Down such rough roads, and even ask
Thy favor at the household task;
Yes, pray upon my weary bed
Until the gray of dawn glows red;
Though none may guess! O Mighty One,
Father, deal gently with my son!

I know the Law thyself didst say,
For every sin some soul must pay—
But I recall his clinging hands,
His tender mouth, his big eyes wet
With tears, it seemed, from heavenly lands:
O Lord, he is my baby yet!
So, if a payment there must be
For one so sweet and weak as he,
Exact it, O my God, from me!

Ruth Kauffman.

From "The Circle Magazine."

TO MY MOTHER

I FEEL that, in the Heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find among their burning terms of love
None so devotional as that of "Mother."

Edgar Allan Poe.

MOTHER AND HOME

MOTHER! Home!—that blest refrain
Sounds through every hastening year:
All things go, but these remain

Held in memory's jewelled chain,
Names most precious, names thrice dear:
Mother! Home!—that blest refrain.

How it sings away my pain!
  How it stills my waking fear!
All things go, but these remain.

Griefs may grow and sorrows wane,
  E'er that melody I hear:
Mother! Home!—that blest refrain,

Tenderness in every strain,
  Thoughts to worship and revere;
All things go, but these remain;

Every night you smile again,
  Every day you bring me cheer:
Mother! Home!—that blest refrain:
  All things go, but these remain!

John Jarvis Holden.

BEING HIS MOTHER

BEING his mother,—when he goes away
  I would not hold him overlong, and so
Sometimes my yielding sight of him grows O
So quick of tears, I joy he did not stay
To catch the faintest rumor of them! Nay,
  Leave always his eyes clear and glad, although
  Mine own, dear Lord, do fill to overflow;
Let his remembered features, as I pray,

Smile ever on me! Ah! what stress of love
  Thou givest me to guard with Thee thiswise:
  Its fullest speech ever to be denied
Mine own—being his mother! All thereof
  Thou knowest only, looking from the skies
  As when not Christ alone was crucified.

James Whitcomb Riley.

From the Biographical Edition
Of the complete works of James Whitcomb Riley,
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THE SUGAR-PLUM TREE

HAVE you ever heard of the Sugar-Plum Tree?
  'Tis a marvel of great renown!
It blooms on the shore of the Lollypop sea
  In the garden of Shut-Eye Town;
The fruit that it bears is so wondrously sweet
  (As those who have tasted it say)
That good little children have only to eat
  Of that fruit to be happy next day.

When you've got to the tree, you would have a hard time
  To capture the fruit which I sing;
The tree is so tall that no person could climb
  To the boughs where the sugar-plums swing!
But up in that tree sits a chocolate cat,
  And a gingerbread dog prowls below—
And this is the way you contrive to get at
  Those sugar-plums tempting you so:

You say but a word to that gingerbread dog
  And he barks with such terrible zest
That the chocolate cat is at once all agog,
  As her swelling proportions attest.
And the chocolate cat goes cavorting around
  From this leafy limb unto that,
And the sugar-plums tumble, of course, to the ground—
  Hurrah for that chocolate cat!

There are marshmallows, gumdrops, and peppermint canes,
  With stripings of scarlet or gold,
And you carry away of the treasure that rains,
  As much as your apron can hold!
So come, little child, cuddle closer to me
  In your dainty white nightcap and gown,
And I'll rock you away to that Sugar-Plum Tree
  In the garden of Shut-Eye Town.

Eugene Field.

From "Poems of Eugene Field,"
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Charles Scribner's Sons.

THE MOTHER

WILL they not leave me in peace?—Yes, dear, I am coming soon.
What need of winter's presence at rose-crowned rites of June?

He brings her home in triumph, the sweet young life he has won;
And I could rejoice in a daughter, had I not lost a son.

Long since God took my others, and now I am left alone;
For though I am still his mother, the wife will claim her
own.

How cold to-night was his greeting! He called me simply
"mother";
Those old sweet names of endearment so soon he gives to
another.

Oh for one hour of the nights when he sat by the hearth
and read,
And 'twas to his voice I listened, and not what the dull
books said.

And often I'd fall to weeping—and yet I knew not why;
But then we older children must have our meaningless cry.

A moment of silence and weeping, and then my tears have
done;
May I, who have wept for nothing, not weep for the loss
of a son?

But why is my loss so bitter? 'Tis what all mothers have
known;
For, though we still are mothers, we may not claim our
own.

Benjamin F. Sledd.

From "The Watchers of the Hearth,"
G. P. Putnam's Sons.

MADONNA

THE child is the future, incarnate,
The spirit unfallen and free,
The spotless forerunner of manhood,
The type of a race that shall be.
O white is the soul new-created,
By the prayer of a mortal beguiled,
And the holiest thing under heaven
Is the innocent heart of a child.

And yet to no eye save the mother's
Life's difficult secret is plain;
She has sounded the deeps of creation,
She has passed through the furnace of pain;
Her soul is the soul of a virgin,
By the passions of earth undefiled,
And the angels in heaven do homage
To the mother adoring her child!

Elaine Goodale Eastman.

Permission of
G. P. Putnam's Sons.

MOTHERHOOD

THE night throbs on; O, let me pray, dear Lord!
Crush off his name a moment from my mouth.
To Thee my eyes would turn, but they go back,
Back to my arm beside me where he lay—
So little, Lord, so little and so warm!

I cannot think that Thou hadst need of him!
He was so little, Lord, he cannot sing,
He cannot praise Thee; all his life had learned
Was to hold fast my kisses in the night.

Give him to me—he is not happy there!
He had not felt this life; his lovely eyes
Just knew me for his mother, and he died.

Hast Thou an angel there to mother him?
I say he loves me best—if he forgets,
If Thou allow it that my child forgets
And runs not out to meet me when I come—

What are my curses to Thee? Thou hast heard
The curse of Abel's mother, and since then
We have not ceased to threaten at Thy throne,
To threat and pray Thee that Thou hold them still
In memory of us.

See Thou tend him well,
Thou God of all the mothers. If he lack
One of his kisses—Ah, my heart, my heart,
Do angels kiss in heaven? Give him back!

Forgive me, Lord, but I am sick with grief,
And tired of tears and cold to comforting.
Thou art wise, I know, and tender, aye, and good,
Thou hast my child, and he is safe in Thee,
And I believe—

Ah, God, my child shall go
Orphaned among the angels! All alone,
So little and alone! He knows not Thee,
He only knows his mother—give him back.

Josephine Dodge Daskam.

From "Poems," Copyright, 1903.
Charles Scribner's Sons.

MOTHERHOOD

MOTHER of Christ long slain, forth glided she,
Following the children joyously astir
Under the cedars and the olive-tree,
Pausing to let their laughter float to her.
Each voice an echo of a voice more dear,
She saw a little Christ in every face.
When lo! another woman, passing near,
Yearned o'er the tender life that filled the place,
And Mary sought the woman's hand, and said:
"I know thee not, yet know thee memory-tossed
And what hath led thee here, as I am led—
These bring to thee a child beloved and lost.

"How radiant was my little one!
And He was fair,
Yea fairer than the fairest sun,
And like its rays through amber spun
His sun-bright hair,
Still, I can see it shine and shine!"
"Even so," the woman said, "was mine."

"His ways were ever darling ways,"
And Mary smiled,—
"So soft and clinging! Glad relays
Of love were all his precious days—
My little child
Was like an infinite that gleamed."
"Even so was mine," the woman dreamed.

Then whispered Mary: "Tell me, thou
Of thine!" And she:
"Oh, mine was rosy as a bough
Blooming with roses, sent, somehow,
To bloom for me!
His balmy fingers left a thrill
Within my breast that warms me still."

Then gazed she down some wilder, darker hour
And said, when Mary questioned knowing not:
"Who art thou, mother of so sweet a flower?"
"I am the mother of Iscariot."

Agnes Lee.

Permission of "The North American Review."
Printed in issue of October, 1907.

A MOTHER'S PLACE

NO earthly friend can fill a mother's place!
There is an instinct love, an added sense,
Within a mother's breast, that draweth hence
Rare quickness of perception, to discern
Her offspring's wants. She needeth not to learn
By voice or gesture. Swift her footsteps glide,
Noiseless as Silence's self; and at the side

Of her beloved one, with love's strength inspired,
She is content to watch for hours untired—
To move the weary limb, and soft recline
The aching head; the language of a sigh,
Wishes unshaped in words, by glance or sign,
Quick to interpret and to gratify.

Anonymous.

THE CHILDREN

THROUGH the day, when the children are round me,
So full of their laughter and play,
I, busy and careworn, oft wonder
How they can be always so gay.
While I long for rest, they care only
To frolic and romp all the day.

They weary me so with their chatter,
Their constant demands and their noise;
They leave muddy tracks on the carpet,
And litter the room with their toys,—
Till at times from a heart that's o'erburdened
I mete out harsh words to my boys.

But at night, when so softly they're sleeping,
Cuddled down in each snug little bed,
With busy hands safe from all mischief,
And quiet each restless young head,
And a look of such peace on their features
As if never a tear they had shed,—

As I gaze on their dear rosy faces,
So sweet in their innocent sleep,
I pardon, unasked, all their mischief,
Nor thought of their naughtiness keep,
For my heart overflows in the silence
With love that is tender and deep.

How small seem the trifles that vex me!
How could they have power to annoy!
And gently I fold the worn garments,
And pick up each battered old toy,
While I think of the homes where no children
Repay every care with a joy,—

Sad homes where their merry young voices
No longer the glad echoes start,
To fall, like the sweetest of music,
On a mother's lone aching heart;
Whose dear ones too soundly are sleeping
From her sheltering arms apart.

O mothers, like me, who are weary,
And often too hastily chide,
Keep not your fond words for the sleepers,
Nor wait for the darkness to hide
The love welling up from the heart-spring
When kneeling your darlings beside.

Let us give of our best in the daytime;
  Let mother-love brighten and bless
The pathway the dear ones must travel;
  Too soon will life's burden oppress;
Let theirs be the joy to remember
  Mother's smile and the tender caress.

Mary K. Buck.

I MISS THEE, MY MOTHER

I MISS thee, my Mother! Thy image is still
  The deepest impressed on my heart,
And the tablet so faithful in death must be chill
  Ere a line of that image depart.
Thou wert torn from my side when I treasured thee most—
  When my reason could measure thy worth;
When I knew but too well that the idol I'd lost
  Could be never replaced upon earth.

I miss thee, my Mother, in circles of joy,
  Where I've mingled with rapturous zest;
For how slight is the touch that will serve to destroy
  All the fairy web spun in my breast!
Some melody sweet may be floating around—
  'Tis a ballad I learned at thy knee;
Some strain may be played, and I shrink from the sound,
  For my fingers oft woke it for thee.

I miss thee, my Mother; when young health has fled,
  And I sink in the languor of pain,
Where, where is the arm that once pillowed my head,
  And the ear that once heard me complain?

Other hands may support, gentle accents may fall—
For the fond and the true are yet mine:
I've a blessing for each; I am grateful to all—
But whose care *can* be soothing as thine?

I miss thee, my Mother, in summer's fair day,
When I rest in the ivy-wreathed bower,
When I hang thy pet linnet's cage high on the spray,
Or gaze on thy favorite flower.
There's the bright gravel path where I played by thy side
When time had scarce wrinkled thy brow,
Where I carefully led thee with worshiping pride
When thy scanty locks gathered the snow.

I miss thee, my Mother, in winter's long night:
I remember the tales thou wouldst tell—
The romance of wild fancy, the legend of fright—
Oh! who could e'er tell them so well?
Thy corner is vacant; thy chair is removed:
It was kind to take that from my eye:
Yet relics are round me—the sacred and loved—
To call up the pure sorrow-fed sigh.

I miss thee, my Mother! Oh, when do I not?
Though I know 'twas the wisdom of Heaven
That the deepest shade fell on my sunniest spot,
And such tie of devotion was riven;
For when thou wert with me my soul was below,
I was chained to the world I then trod;
My affections, my thoughts, were all earth-bound; but now
They have followed thy spirit to God!

Eliza Cook.

ABSENCE

"The heart that we have lain near before our birth, is the only one that cannot forget that it has loved us."

—PHILIP SLINGSBY.

MY birthday! O beloved mother!
My heart is with thee o'er the seas!
I did not think to count another
Before I wept upon thy knees—
Before this scroll of absent years
Was blotted with thy streaming tears.

My own I do not care to check—
I weep—albeit here alone—
As if I hung upon thy neck,
As if thy lips were on my own,
As if this full, sad heart of mine,
Were beating closely upon thine.

Four weary years! How looks she now?
What light is in those tender eyes?
What trace of time has touched the brow
Whose look is borrowed of the skies
That listen to her nightly prayer?
How is she changed since *he* was there?
Who sleeps upon her heart alway—
Whose name upon her lips is worn—
For whom the night seems made to pray—
For whom she wakes to pray at morn—
Whose sight is dim, whose heart-strings stir,
Who weeps these tears—to think of *her!*

I know not if my mother's eyes
Would find me changed in slighter things;
I've wandered beneath many skies,
And tasted of some bitter springs;
And many leaves, once fair and gay,
From youth's full flower have dropped away—
But, as these looser leaves depart,
The lessened flower gets near the core,
And when deserted quite, the heart
Takes closer what was dear of yore—
And yearns to those who loved it first—
The sunshine and the dew by which its bud
was nursed.

Dear mother! dost thou love me yet?
Am I remembered in my home?
When those I love for joy are met,
Does some one wish that I would come?
Thou *dost*—I *am* beloved of thee!
But as the schoolboy numbers o'er
Night after night, the Pleiades,
And finds the stars he found before—
As turns the maiden off her token—
As counts the miser o'er his gold—
So, till life's "silver cord is broken"
Would I of thy fond love be told.—
My heart is full—mine eyes are wet—
Dear mother! dost thou love thy long-lost
wanderer yet?

Oh! when the hour to meet again
Creeps on—and, speeding o'er the sea,

My heart takes up its lengthened chain,
And, link by link, draws nearer thee,
When land is hailed, and from the shore,
Comes off the blessed breath of home,
With fragrance from my mother's door
Of flowers forgotten when I come—
When port is gained, and slowly now
The old familiar paths are passed,
And entering, unconscious how,
I gaze upon thy face at last,
And run to thee, all faint and weak—
And feel thy tears upon my cheek—
Oh! if my heart break not with joy,
The light of heaven will fairer seem,
And I shall grow once more a boy,
And, mother!—'twill be like a dream
That we were parted thus for years.
And once that we have dried our tears,
How will the days seem long and bright—
To meet thee always with the morn,
And hear thy blessing every night—
Thy "dearest"—thy "first-born"—
And be no more, as now, in a strange land,
forlorn.

Nathaniel P. Willis.

SHARING WITH GOD

"I LOVE," she said, with her faint, sweet smile,
"But I shall not narrow this life of mine;
Or bid my spirit its thirst beguile
With the joys that women still count divine.

Why, I am a soul! I am part of God!
  I doubt, and question,—have wings to mount;
Do you think I shall only moil and plod,
  And fill my cup at the common fount?"

That was only a year and a day—
  Last night her fingers were softly pressed
On the downy head of a babe, that lay
  With warm, wet mouth at her gracious breast.
"Do you think," she said, "there is rarer bliss
  Where the long bright cycles of heaven unroll?
Or any wonder more deep than this,
  To share with God in a human soul?"

Emily Huntington Miller.

THE QUEENLIEST WOMAN

THE queenliest woman, bravest, best of all sweet things
  beneath the sun?
I say the queenliest is that one—seek north or south or east
  or west—
Who loves to fold the little frock and hear the cradle rock
  and rock.

I say the purest woman, best beneath our forty stars is she
Who loves her spouse most ardently and rocks the cradle
  oftenest—
Who rocks and sings, and rocks, and then when birds are
  nestling, rocks again.

Joaquin Miller.

THE SONGS MY MOTHER SANG

I HEAR them in the whispering winds,
The forest's rhythmic strain,
The chime of bells, that sinks and swells,
The patter of the rain.
I hear them in the vesper call
Of birds from copse and tree;
Each note prolongs the dear old songs
That mother sang to me.

I hear them in the ocean's voice,
The prattle of a child,
The dashing rill, the fountain's trill,
The tempest fierce and wild.
I hear them through the silent night,
In dreams they echo free,
Since memory throngs with tender songs
That mother sang to me.

I heard them when a babe I lay
Upon her loving breast,
And when a child their charm beguiled
My eager brain to rest.
I hear them now, and some last hour
Across death's swelling sea
My soul shall wing, while angels sing
The songs she sang to me.

Lalia Mitchell.

AN ENGLISH MOTHER

EVERY week of every season out of English ports go forth,
White of sail or white of trail, East, or West, or South,
or North,
Scattering like a flight of pigeons, half a hundred home-
sick ships,
Bearing half a hundred striplings—each with kisses on his
lips
Of some silent mother, fearful lest she show herself too
fond,
Giving him to bush or desert as one pays a sacred bond,
—Tell us, you who hide your heartbreak, which is sadder,
when all's done,
To repine an English mother, or to roam, an English son?

You who shared your babe's first sorrow when his cheek no
longer pressed
On the perfect, snow-and-roseleaf beauty of your mother-
breast,
In the rigor of his nurture was your woman's mercy mute,
Knowing he was doomed to exile with the savage and the
brute?
Did you school yourself to absence all his adolescent years,
That, though you be torn with parting, he should never see
the tears?
Now his ship has left the offing for the many-mouthèd
sea,
This your guerdon, empty heart, by empty bed to bend the
knee!

And if he be but the latest thus to leave your dwindling
board,
Is a sorrow less for being added to a sorrow's hoard?
Is the mother-pain the duller that to-day his brothers stand,
Facing ambuscades of Congo, or alarms from Zululand?
Toil, where blizzards drift the snow like smoke across the
plains of death?
Faint, where tropic fens at morning steam with fever-laden
breath?
Die, that in some distant river's veins the English blood
may run—
Mississippi, Yangtze, Ganges, Nile, Mackenzie, Amazon?

Ah! you still must wait and suffer in a solitude untold
While your sisters of the nations call you passive, call you
cold—
Still must scan the news of sailings, breathless search the
slow gazette,
Find the dreadful name . . . and, later, get his blithe fare-
well! And yet—
Shall the lonely hearthstone shame the legions who have
died
Grudging not the price their country pays for progress and
for pride?
—Nay; but, England, do not ask us thus to emulate your
scars
Until women's tears are reckoned in the budgets of your
wars.

Robert Underwood Johnson.

Permission of the Author.
From "Collected Poems."
Yale University Press, 1923.

TO MY MOTHER

LOVE unfailing, kindly counsel, all the pleasure
In your mere delightful presence, and your smile
It is loss that none may map or measure;
Life will feel it every weary mile.

Roden Noel.

MOTHER'S BOYS

YES, I know there are stains on my carpet,
The traces of small, muddy boots;
And I see your fair tapestry glowing,
All spotless with flowers and fruits.

And I know that my walls are disfigured
With prints of small fingers and hands;
And that your own household most truly
In immaculate purity stands.

And I know that my parlor is littered
With many odd treasures and toys,
While your own is in daintiest order,
Unharmed by the presence of boys.

And I know that my room is invaded
Quite boldly all hours of the day;
While you sit in yours unmolested
And dream the soft quiet away.

Yes, I know there are four little bedsides
Where I must stand watchful each night,
While you may go out in your carriage,
And flash in your dresses so bright.

Now, I think I'm a neat little woman;
And like my house orderly, too;
And I'm fond of all dainty belongings,
Yet I would not change places with you.

No! keep your fair home and its order,
Its freedom from bother and noise;
And keep your own fanciful leisure,
But give me my four splendid boys.

Anonymous.

DREAMS

A MOTHER sat in the twilight dim,
Holding her boy while she talked to him.
"Now, tell me, what are you going to be
When grown to a man, dear heart," said she.

"A soldier!" eager replied the child.
But the mother tenderly, sadly smiled.
"And fight—and be killed, perhaps? No, no!
My laddy! I *could* not let you go!"

"A sailor, speeding the ocean o'er!"
But the mother cuddled him close once more.
"And maybe never come back? Fie, fie!"
She whispered in tones part laugh, part sigh.

A puzzled look on the boy's fair face
Showed of his wavering thoughts a trace.
At length, in a voice all satisfied:
"Why—then I'll marry!" he stoutly cried.

The mother jealously smoothed his head.
"And what will become of *me?*" she said.
The lips of the boy sought hers anew—
"But, darling mother, I'll marry *you!*"

E. L. Sabin.

HIGH OR LOW

FOR mother in lowly cabin, or mother in palace hall,
Is ever the truest and dearest, and ever the best of all.
Mother with hands toil-hardened, mother in pearls and lace,
The light of heavenly beauty shines in her tender face.

Margaret E. Sangster.

A MOTHER'S HEART

A LITTLE dreaming, such as mothers know;
A little lingering over dainty things;
A happy heart, wherein hope all aglow
Stirs like a bird at dawn that wakes and sings,
And that is all.

A little clasping to her yearning breast;
A little musing over future years;
A heart that prays: "Dear Lord, Thou knowest best—
But spare my flower life's bitterest rain of tears"—
And that is all.

A little spirit speeding through the night;
A little home grown lonely, dark and chill;
A sad heart groping for the light;
A little snow-clad grave beneath the hill—
And that is all.

A little gathering of life's broken thread;
A little patience keeping back the tears;
A song that sings, "Thy darling is not dead,
God keep her safe through His eternal years"—
And that is all.

Anonymous.

SHADOWS

ALL day they frisk about the tree, quick darting as if shy,
And stay right close till ev'ning drives the sunset from the sky;
But when the last ray's gone below the hills 'way in the west
The little shadows spread about and lull the world to rest.

And even in the sitting-room, and all 'round Mother's chair,
Those frisky shadows dance and dart—they're in the very air.
But one place where they never come is in my mother's eyes.
I've looked and looked, but never can I see one shadow rise;

They always shine a steady glow—it must be different light
My mother's eyes show all the time from that which leaves at night.

And while I like the soft dark when I'm safe and snug in
bed,
It's good to know of one place where there's always light
instead.

Alverda Van Tuyll.

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MOTHER'S BOY

MAKE rowdy music, little one!
Make rowdy mirth and song!
It is for life like this, my own,
That I have watched you long.

Romp in your merry ways apart,
And shout in freedom wild;
But creep at night time to my heart,
A tired little child.

Cora A. Watson.

THE MOTHER'S HOPE

IS there, when the winds are singing
In the happy summer-time,—
When the raptured air is ringing
With Earth's music heavenward springing,
Forest chirp, and village chime,—
Is there, of the sounds that float
Unsighingly, a single note
Half so sweet and clear and wild
As the laughter of a child?

Listen! and be now delighted:
  Morn hath touched her golden strings;
Earth and Sky their vows have plighted;
Life and light are reunited
  Amid countless carollings;
  Yet, delicious as they are,
There's a sound that's sweeter far,—
One that makes the heart rejoice
More than all,—the human voice!

Organ finer, deeper, clearer,
  Though it be a stranger's tone,—
Than the winds or waters dearer,
More enchanting to the hearer,
  For it answereth to his own.
But, of all its witching words,
Sweeter than the song of birds,
Those are sweetest, bubbling wild
Through the laughter of a child.

Harmonies from time-touched towers,
  Haunted strains from rivulets,
Hum of bees among the flowers,
Rustling leaves, and silver showers,—
  These, ere long, the ear forgets;
But in mine there is a sound
Ringing on the whole year round,—
Heart-deep laughter that I heard
Ere my child could speak a word.

Ah! 'twas heard by ear far purer,
  Fondlier formed to catch the strain,—
Ear of one whose love is surer,—
Hers, the mother, the endurer
  Of the deepest share of pain;
Hers the deepest bliss to treasure
Memories of that cry of pleasure,
Hers to hoard, a lifetime after,
Echoes of that infant laughter.

'Tis a mother's large affection
  Hears with a mysterious sense,—
Breathings that evade detection,
Whisper faint, and fine inflection,
  Thrill in her with power intense.
Childhood's honeyed words untaught
Hiveth she in loving thought,—
Tones that never thence depart;
For she listens—with her heart.

Laman Blanchard.

THE MOTHER'S HEART

WHEN first thou camest, gentle, shy, and fond,
  My eldest-born, first hope, and dearest treasure,
My heart received thee with a joy beyond
  All that it yet had felt of earthly pleasure;
Nor thought that any love again might be
So deep and strong as that I felt for thee.

Faithful and true, with sense beyond thy years,
  And natural piety that leaned to heaven;

Wrung by a harsh word suddenly to tears,
  Yet patient to rebuke when justly given;
Obedient, easy to be reconciled,
And meekly cheerful; such wert thou, my child!

Not willing to be left—still by my side,
  Haunting my walks, while summer-day was dying,
Nor leaving in thy turn, but pleased to glide
  Through the dark room where I was sadly lying;
Or by the couch of pain, a sitter meek,
Watch the dim eye, and kiss the fevered cheek.

O boy! of such as thou are oftenest made
  Earth's fragile idols; like a tender flower,
No strength in all thy freshness, prone to fade,
  And bending weakly to the thunder-shower;
Still, round the loved, thy heart found force to bind,
And clung, like woodbine shaken in the wind!

Then THOU, my merry love,—bold in thy glee,
  Under the bough, or by the firelight dancing,
With thy sweet temper, and thy spirit free,—
  Didst come, as restless as a bird's wing glancing,
Full of a wild and irrepressible mirth,
Like a young sunbeam to the gladdened earth!

Thine was the shout, the song, the burst of joy,
  Which sweet from childhood's rosy lip resoundeth;
Thine was the eager spirit naught could cloy,
  And the glad heart from which all grief reboundeth;
And many a mirthful jest and mock reply
Lurked in the laughter of thy dark-blue eye.

And thine was many an art to win and bless,
  The cold and stern to joy and fondness warming;
The coaxing smile, the frequent soft caress,
  The earnest, tearful prayer all wrath disarming!
Again my heart a new affection found,
But thought that love with thee had reached its bound.

At length THOU camest,—thou, the last and least,
  Nicknamed "the Emperor" by thy laughing brothers,
Because a haughty spirit swelled thy breast,
  And thou didst seek to rule and sway the others,
Mingling with every playful infant wile
A mimic majesty that made us smile.

And O, most like a regal child wert thou!
  An eye of resolute and successful scheming!
Fair shoulders, curling lips, and dauntless brow,
  Fit for the world's strife, not for poet's dreaming;
And proud the lifting of thy stately head,
And the firm bearing of thy conscious tread.

Different from both! yet each succeeding claim
  I, that all other love had been forswearing,
Forthwith admitted, equal and the same;
  Nor injured either by this love's comparing,
Nor stole a fraction for the newer call,—
But in the mother's heart found room for all!

Sarah Elizabeth Norton.

THE SAD MOTHER

OWHEN the half-light weaves
Wild shadows on the floor,
How ghostly come the withered leaves
Stealing about my door!

I sit and hold my breath,
Lone in the lonely house;
Naught breaks the silence still as death,
Only a creeping mouse.

The patter of leaves, it may be,
But liker patter of feet,
The small feet of my own baby
That never felt the heat.

The small feet of my son,
Cold as the grave yard sod;
My little, dumb, unchristened one
That may not win to God.

"Come in, dear babe," I cry,
Opening the door so wide.
The leaves go stealing softly by;
How dark it is outside!

And though I kneel and pray
Long on the threshold-stone
The little feet press on their way,
And I am ever alone.

Katharine Tynan.

LAMENT

I AM lying in thy tomb, love,
Lying in thy tomb,
Tho' I move within the gloom, love,
Breathe within the gloom!
Men deem life not fled, dear,
Deem my life not fled,
Tho' I with thee am dead, dear,
I with thee am dead,
O my little child.

What is the gray world, darling,
What is the gray world,
Where the worm lies curl'd, darling,
The deathworm lies curl'd?
They tell me of the spring, dear!
Do I want the spring?
Will she waft upon her wing, dear,
The joy-pulse of her wing,
Thy songs, thy blossoming,
O my little child.

For the hallowing of thy smile, love,
The rainbow of thy smile,
Gleaming for awhile, love,
Gleaming to beguile,
Replunged me in the cold, dear,
Leaves me in the cold.
And I feel so very old, dear,
Very, very old!

Would they put me out of pain, dear,
Out of all my pain,
Since I may not live again, dear,
Never live again!

I am lying in the grave, love,
In thy little grave,
Yet I hear the wind rave, love,
And the wild wave!
I would lie asleep, darling,
With thee lie asleep,
Unhearing the world weep, darling,
Little children weep!
O my little child!

Roden Noel.

THE LIGHT IN MOTHER'S EYES

DEAR beacon of my childhood's day,
The lodestar of my youth,
A mingled glow of tenderest love
And firm, unswerving truth,
I've wandered far o'er east and west,
'Neath many stranger skies,
But ne'er I've seen a fairer light
Than that in mother's eyes.

In childhood when I crept to lay
My tired head on her knee,
How gently shone the mother-love
In those dear eyes on me;

And when in youth my eager feet
  Roamed from her side afar,
Where'er I went that light divine
  Was aye my guiding star.

In hours when all life's sweetest buds
  Burst into dewy bloom,
In hours when cherished hopes lay dead,
  In sorrow and in gloom;
In evening's hush, or morning's glow,
  Or in the solemn night,
Those mother eyes still shed on me
  Their calm, unchanging light.

Long since the patient hands I loved
  Were folded in the clay,
And long have seemed the lonely years
  Since mother went away;
But still I know she waits for me
  In fields of Paradise,
And I shall reach them yet, led by
  The light in mothers' eyes.

L. M. Montgomery.

THE MOTHER'S LAMENT

OFF to the college my only son went;
  I loved him as mothers do—
He was bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh,
And blood of my heart-blood too.

Returning, he kissed me and praised the old place
And said he would make him a name:
Brave, splendid, and loyal, my son had come back—
But he had not come back the same.

Out into the world my only son went;
I prayed and I hoped and I grieved
For all he must pass through, and how I rejoiced
When he won!—I had always believed.
He made me a visit and said that to him
I was dearer than riches or fame:
How true and how tender the boy that came back!—
But he had not come back the same.

For in years that had passed I had shared all his hopes,
All his joys, all his woes, all his play;
I had slaved for him, borne for him, suffered for him,
And been all his comfort and stay.
But how shrunken my part in his life has become!
I grieve, without anger or blame,
That his need for me's gone, that his need for me's gone.—
He'll nevermore be the same.

St. Clair Adams.

MOTHER KNOWS

THEY say my dad is a very wise man
And few lawyers can make things as plain as he can,
But whenever to him with my questions I go,
He always replies, "Ask your mother; she'll know."

If I ask why Sue in the parlor at night,
When Joe Clifford comes calling, must turn down the light,
Till it shines with the tiniest, least little glow,
He simply replies, "Ask your mother; she'll know."

And when the baby curls up his bare toes
And looks up so funny and gurgles and crows,
I ask dad to tell me what makes him do so,
But he's sure to reply, "Ask your mother; she'll know."

And once when we had a new maid in the house,
She dropped a big dish at the sight of a mouse;
I couldn't see why, but dad said, "Suppose
You wait till to-night and ask mother; she knows."

I can't understand it, but somehow I feel
That mother's not getting a downright square deal;
Why don't they print her picture, in her best clothes,
Like dad's in the paper? For mother she "knows."

E. I. Farrington.

From "Holland's Magazine."
October, 1909.

A MOTHER'S GIFT—THE BIBLE

REMEMBER, love, who gave thee this,
When other days shall come,
When she who had thine earliest kiss,
Sleeps in her narrow home.
Remember! 'twas a mother gave
The gift to one she'd die to save!

That mother sought a pledge of love,
The holiest for her son,
And from the gifts of God above,
She chose a goodly one;
She chose for her beloved boy,
The source of light, and life, and joy.

She bade him keep the gift, that, when
The parting hour should come,
They might have hope to meet again
In an eternal home.
She said his faith in this would be
Sweet incense to her memory.

And should the scoffer, in his pride,
Laugh that fond faith to scorn,
And bid him cast the pledge aside,
That he from youth had borne,
She bade him pause, and ask his breast
If *she* or *he* had loved him best.

A parent's blessing on her son
Goes with this holy thing;
The love that would retain the one,
Must to the other cling.
Remember! 'tis no idle toy:
A mother's gift! remember, boy.

W. Fergusson.

AT SINGING TIME

I HAVE a little daughter
  Who's scarcely half-past three
And in the twilight hour
  She climbs upon my knee
And snuggles down within my arm
  With "Mother, sing to me!"

I sing about the squirrels
  That frolic in the wood,
About two furry kittens—
  One naughty and one good
And then some tender lullabies—
  Just as a mother should.

The light grows faint, and fainter;
  The sandman guards the door;
My baby's boat drifts slowly
  Upon the slumber shore—
But if the singing stops, she cries,
  "O Mother, sing some more!"

I'm sure no prima-donna
  Adored from East to West,
Feels half the satisfaction,
  Or is so truly blest
As I, when singing to my child
  Held closely to my breast.

Not all the fame and glory
  Of divas can compare
With that deep thrill of pleasure
  Which is my humble share,
For precious are the laurel-wreaths
  That singing-mothers wear!

Anne P. L. Field.

Permission of "The Independent and Weekly Review."

THE MOTHER

(*Translated from the Chinese*)

FROM out the South the genial breezes sigh,
They shake the bramble branches to and fro
Whose lovely green delights the gazer's eye:
A mother's thoughts are troubled even so.

From out the South the genial breezes move,
They shake the branches of the bramble tree:
Unless the sons fair men and honest prove,
The virtuous mother will dishonored be.

The frigid fount with violence and spray
By Shiyoun's town upcasts its watery store:
Though full seven sons she gave to life and day,
The mother's heart is but disturbed the more.

When sings the redbreast, it is bliss to hear,
The dulcet notes the little songster breeds;
But ah! more blissful to a mother's ear,
The fair report of seven good children's deeds.

George Borrow.

A MOTHER'S ANSWER

THE good man took the Sacred Book,
And the trial of Abraham read,
Until in the solemn shadows,
The sorrow grew wondrous near;—
Fathers looked at their own bright sons,
And the mothers dropped a tear.

Thoughtful all sat a little space,
And then the Dominie said:
"David, couldst thou have done this thing?"
And the old man bowed his head,
And standing up with lifted face,
Answered: "I think I could,
For I have found through eighty years
That the Lord our God is good."

"Janet, you've been a mother oft,
Could your faith have stood the test?"
She raised her grandchild in her arms,
And she held it to her breast—
"God knows a mother's love," she said,
While the tears dropped from her eyes;
"And never from a mother's heart
Would have asked such sacrifice."

"O mother, wise," the preacher said,
"O mother, wise and good,
A deeper depth than man can reach
Thy heart hath understood.

Take Janet's sermon with you, friends,
And as your years go by,
Believe our Father no poor soul
Beyond its strength will try."

Lillie E. Barr.

TRANSFIGURATION

(On the death of her mother)

MYSTERIOUS death! who in a single hour
Life's gold can so refine,
And by thy art divine
Change mortal weakness to immortal power!

Bending beneath the weight of eighty years,
Spent with the noblest strife
Of a victorious life,
We watched her fading heavenward, through our tears.

But ere the sense of loss our hearts had wrung,
A miracle was wrought;
And swift as happy thought
She lived again,—brave, beautiful, and young.

Age, pain, and sorrow dropped the veils they wore
And showed the tender eyes
Of angels in disguise,
Whose discipline so patiently she bore.

The past years brought their harvest rich and fair;
While memory and love,
Together, fondly wove
A golden garland for the silver hair.

How could we mourn like those who are bereft,
When every pang of grief
Found balm for its relief
In counting up the treasures she had left?—

Faith that withstood the shocks of toil and time;
Hope that defied despair;
Patience that conquered care;
And loyalty, whose courage was sublime;

The great deep heart that was a home for all,—
Just, eloquent, and strong
In protest against wrong;
Wide charity, that knew no sin, no fall;

The Spartan spirit that made life so grand,
Mating poor daily needs
With high, heroic deeds
That wrested happiness from Fate's hard hand.

We thought to weep, but sing for joy instead,
Full of the grateful peace
That follows her release;
For nothing but the weary dust lies dead.

Oh, noble woman! never more a queen
Than in the laying down
Of scepter and of crown
To win a greater kingdom, yet unseen:

Teaching us how to seek the highest goal,
To earn the true success,—
To live, to love, to bless,—
And make death proud to take a royal soul.

Louisa M. Alcott.

THE MOTHER'S BLESSING

THERE in her high-backed chair she sits,
Sad-eyed woman with silver hair;
The shadows lengthen, the daylight flits,
And she seems to listen, as still she knits,
For the sound of the step on the silent stair.

The lamps flash out in the twilight street,
And many a neighboring casement gleams,
A beacon of home to hurrying feet;
But the white-haired woman in the high-backed seat
Heeds them not, as she knits and dreams—

Dreams of a boy, long years ago
Clasped her neck on a summer day,
Begged her blessing, kissed her, and so
Fled with the speed of a hunted doe
Down to the sea and sailed away!

A boy with an eye as blue and bright
As the cloudless noon of a tropic sky;
A fair-haired lad, and his heart was right—
Was it ten? Yes, ten long years to-night!
Shall I bless him again before I die?

Here at my knee his prayer he said:
"Our Father, all hallowed by thy name;
Give us this day our daily bread,"
Passing my hand o'er his golden head,
While oft the tears in his blue eyes came.

Hark! a step on the silent stair!
  A soft, quick step, and a breathing light!
A form kneels low by the high-backed chair,
And the mother's blessing of bygone years
  The mother's fingers are twined to-night.

Is it a dream? or can it be,
  This tall man, with the beard of gold,
That kneels so low by his mother's knee,
Is the blue-eyed boy that fled to sea
  That sunny morn in the day of old?

Yes, it is he, for the joyful tears
  Drop from her eyes in a holy rain;
"Our Father" anew from his lips she hears,
And the mother's blessing of bygone years
Has brought her prodigal home again.

Anonymous.

THE BRAVE AT HOME

THE mother who conceals her grief
  When to her breast her son she presses,
Then breathes a few brave words and brief,
  Kissing the patriot brow she blesses,
With no one but her secret God
  To know the pain that weighs upon her,—
Sheds holy blood as e'er the sod
  Received on freedom's field of honor.

Thomas B. Read.

DEAREST LITTLE ONE

THE mother yields her little babe to sleep
Upon her tender breast,
And singing still a lullaby,
Hushes its heart to rest:
"O sleep in peace upon my bosom,
And sweetly may your small dreams blossom;
And from the fears that made me weep you,
And from all pains, as soft you sleep you,
The angels lightly guard and keep you,
And hold you blest!

"Your mother, dear, is often full of fear,
As the moments run;
Her love entwines so close, ah dear,—
Dearest little one.
Her song is in its music weeping
To think of death and its dark keeping,
That yet might turn those red cheeks white,—
Life's rose, that grows so in her sight,—
And your bright eyes, like morning light,
Dearest little one!"

Ernest Rhys.

A PLACE FOR THE BOYS

AH, what if they should? What if your boy or mine
Should cross o'er the threshold which marks out the line
'Twixt virtue and vice, 'twixt pureness and sin,
And leave all his innocent boyhood within?

Oh, what if they should, because you and I,
While the days and the months and the years hurry by,
Are too busy with cares and with life's fleeting joys
To make round our hearthstones a place for the boys?

A place for the boys, dear mother, I pray,
As cares settle round our short earthly way;
Don't let us forget, by our kind, loving deeds,
To show we remember their pleasures and needs,
Though our souls may be vexed with problems of life,
And worn with besetments and toilings and strife,
Our hearts will keep younger,—your tired heart and mine—
If we give them a place in their innermost shrine;
And to our life's latest hour 'twill be one of our joys
That we kept a small corner,—a place for the boys.

Anonymous.

MOTHER'S HERITAGE

MY mother's voice! Fond memory can no richer treasure bring,
No songs are half so sweet to me as those she used to sing,
No tales so well remembered are as those rehearsed to me,
A happy, trusting little child, beside my mother's knee.

My mother, when I think of all thy self-forgetting zeal,
That sought another's grief to share, another's woes to heal;
The little shining deeds of love the world not often sees,
Ah me! I cannot count the worth of blessings such as these!

But still in fadeless memories they are treasured every
one,
Those little golden threads of life her hands so deftly spun;
And often as in revery they come again to mind,
I would that I might leave as rich a heritage behind.

Helen C. Smith.

A NECKLACE

NO rubies of red for my lady,
No jewel that glitters and charms;—
But the light of the skies,
In a little one's eyes,
And a necklace of two little arms.

Of two little arms that are clinging,
(Oh ne'er was a necklace like this!)
And the wealth of the world,
And love's sweetness impearled,
In the joy of a little one's kiss.

A necklace of love for my lady,
That was linked by the angels above,—
No other but this,
And a tender, sweet kiss,
That sealeth a little one's love.

Frank L. Stanton.

Printed in and permission from
"The Atlanta Constitution."

MOTHER WEPT

MOTHER wept, and father sigh'd;
With delight a-glow
Cried the lad, "To-morrow," cried,
"To the pit I go."

Up and down the place he sped,
Greeted old and young,
Far and wide the tidings spread,
Clapp'd his hands and sung.

Came his cronies, some to gaze
Rapt in wonder; some
Free with counsel; some with praise;
Some with envy dumb.

"May he," many a gossip cried,
"Be from peril kept";
Father hid his face and sighed,
Mother turned and wept.

Joseph Skipsey.

THIS BEAUTIFUL BOY

SO pure is my child, that I dare to say
His Maker would not despise
To color the sky on some rare June day,
From the blue in his handsome eyes;
And this is the sweetest thought there can be—
This beautiful boy belongs to me.

They tell me the world is a dreary place,
And heavily sown with tears;
But when I look in my child's dear face,
My heart is too glad for fears;
Glad, as the good Lord meant me to be,
When He gave this beautiful boy to me.

Mary Riley Smith.

THE PUREST THING

THE purest thing I know in all earth's holding
Is mother love, her precious child enfolding;
Yet when the mother's footstep feeble groweth,
As sweet the child love then which round her floweth.

Anonymous.

MOTHER'S WORK

IF thy work be holding dimpled cheeks of babies to thy breast,
Fashioning small garments where the needle moves to inward tune,
Stitching dainty scallops for a little rounded wrist,
Or knitting a silk sheathing for feet as soft as roseleaves,
Count thyself a sister of the gentle Judean woman,
Mother of a Saviour! How knowest thou the outcome
Of this beauteous bud of home? With thee lies the unfolding.

Make thy garden fragrant with tender self-denying.
With love purged pure by prayer, woo the opening blossom.
Thine a holy business set thee by the Father;

All its pains rewarded by gifts of honeyed kisses,
And angel looks that babies bring from heaven,
Clasping of soft arms, and murmuring of lovers
Innocent as birds in the dewy boughs of Maytime.

Mary Frances Butts.

A MOTHER

AH! bless'd are they for whom, 'mid all their pains,
That faithful and unalter'd love remains;
Who, Life wreck'd round them—hunted from their rest,
And by all else forsaken or distressed—
Claim, in *one* heart their sanctuary and shrine—
As I, my Mother, claim'd my place in thine.

Sarah Elizabeth Norton.

THE SONG MY MOTHER SINGS

O SWEET unto my heart is the song my mother sings
As eventide is brooding on its dark and noiseless wings!
Every note is charged with memory—every memory bright with rays
Of the golden hour of promise in the lap of childhood's days.
The orchard blooms anew, and each blossom scents the way,
And I feel again the breath of eve among the new-mown hay;
While through the halls of memory in happy notes there rings
All the life-joy of the past in the song my mother sings.

It's a song of love and triumph, it's a song of toil and care,
It is filled with chords of pathos, and it's set in notes of
prayer;
It is bright with dreams and visions of the days that are
to be,
And as strong in faith's devotion as the heart-beat of the
sea;
It is linked in mystic measure to sweet voices from above,
And is starred with ripest blessing through a mother's sacred
love.
O sweet and strong and tender are the memories that it
brings,
As I list in joy and rapture to the song my mother sings.

Thomas O'Hagan.

THE ROAD IS SO LONESOME BETWEEN

WHEN the crickets chirp in the evening,
And the stars flash out in the sky,
I sit in my lonely door-way
And watch the children go by;
I look at their fresh young faces,
And hark to each merry word,
For to me, a child's own language
Is the sweetest e'er was heard.

And so I sit in my door-way
In the hour that I love the best,
And think as I see them passing,
My child will come with the rest;

Think, when I hear the clicking
  Of the little garden gate,
My darling's hand is upon it—
  O, why has she come so late?

But the days have been slowly weaving
  Their warp of toil in my life;
The weeks have rolled on me their burden
  Of waiting and patience and strife;
The flowers that came with the summer
  Have finished their errand so sweet,
And autumn is dropping her harvests
  Mellow and ripe at my feet.

And yet my little girl comes not,
  And I think she has missed her way,
And strayed from this cold, dark country
  To one of perpetual day.
I think that the angels have found her,
  And, loving her better than we,
Have begged the Good Father to keep her,
  Right on through eternity.

Perhaps. But I long to enfold her,
  To tangle my hands in her hair,
To feast my starved mouth on her kisses,
  To hear her light foot on the stair.
I am but a poor, selfish mother,
  And mother-hearts starve, though they know
Their children are drinking the nectar
  From lilies in heaven that blow.

Some day I am sure I shall find her,—
  But the road is so lonesome between,
My spirit grows sick and impatient
  For a glimpse of the pastures so green.
Till then I shall sit in the door-way,
  In the hour that my heart loves best,
And think when the children pass homeward,
  My child will come with the rest.

Mary Riley Smith.

MOTHER

HOW oft some passing word will tend
  In visions to recall
Our truest, dearest, fondest friend—
  That earliest friend of all,

Who tended on our childish years,
  Those years that pass as hours,
When all earth's dewy, trembling tears,
  Lie hid within her flowers.

Thou star that shines in darkest night,
  When most we need thy aid,
Nor changes but to beam more bright
  When others coldly fade.

Oh, Mother! round thy hallowed name
  Such blissful memory springs,
The heart in all but years the same,
  With reverent worship clings.

Thy voice is first to greet us, when
  Bright fortune's smile is o'er us,
And thine the hand that's readiest then
  To lift the veil before us.

Or if dark clouds close round our head
  And care steals o'er the brow,
While hope's fair flowers fall crushed and dead,
  Unchangèd still art thou.

Anonymous.

MATERNITY

I MUST go all my days
  Softly as snow, whose wings
Follow the hidden ways
Of unimagined springs.

My stricken heart is caught
In briers of surprise;
Its beats are hushed as thought,
And eloquent as eyes.

I cry God to pity them
Whose joy is boisterous,
Since I have touched the hem
  Of the miraculous.

Babette Deutsch.

Permission from "The Yale Review."

IF I COULD LAY MY HAND

IF I could lay my hand upon the heart
That moulders underneath the church-yard snows,
And bid the sleeping pulses wake and start,
And to the faded lips restore the rose;

If I could lead the precious child you love,
With shrinking footsteps to his earthly place;
If I could bring him from the fold above,
The tangled paths of life again to trace;

Say! would you bid him lay his glory by,
That you might hold him to your troubled breast?
And would your yearning mother-heart deny
The good to him, that you might thus be blest?

Mary Riley Smith.

MOTHER'S LOVE

I'VE lived to learn that friends grow weak,
When trouble marks you for its own;
The ones you love oft turn aside,
And leave the fight to you alone.
I've stood on many scenes of strife,
I've stood where care and pain assailed,
And though friends often turned away,
Yet mother's hand has never failed.

As in that childhood far removed
She smoothed my brow and dried each tear,
Still, in young manhood's troubled hour,
With loving words she hovers near.

Oh, fickle love and friendship false!
  Oh, glittering dreams and hopes bewailed!
You weakened in life's darkest hour,
  But mother's love has never failed.

Whatever God shall choose to do
  With this frail tenement of clay,
Whatever use He finds for it
  Along life's dark and dreary way;
That much shall be a monument
  To tell mankind where'er assailed,
"A mother's love, a mother's prayers,
  A mother's hand have never failed!"

Louis E. Thayer.

From "The People's Home Journal."

IF I HAD AN EAGLE'S WING

IF I had an eagle's wing,
  How grand to sail the sky!
But I should drop to the earth
  If I heard my baby cry.
My baby, my darling,
The wings may go for me.

If I were a splendid queen,
  With a crown to keep in place,
Would it do for a little wet mouth
  To rub all over my face?
My baby, my darling,
The crown may go for me.

Eliza Turner.

I NEVER CAN FORGET

I NEVER can forget the voice
That always made my heart rejoice;
Tho' I have wandered God knows where,
Still I remember mother's prayer.
Whene'er I think of her so dear,
I feel her angel spirit near;
A voice comes floating on the air,
Reminding me of mother's prayer.

J. W. Van De Venter.

ON A SEVENTEENTH BIRTHDAY

TO-DAY my tall broad-shouldered lad,
With such a grave, protective mien,
I watched with eyes grown strangely sad,
Though proud these mother-eyes had been,—
For brave and bonny seventeen
Is not a saddening sight to see,
Yet I have lost, long years between,
My little boy that used to be!

How well-remembered and how glad
That hour when happier than a queen
A rosy infant son I had,
When all the singing world was green;
With what deep gratitude serene
I welcomed my maternity—
He was the sweetest ever seen—
My little boy that used to be!

I see him now in velvet clad—
And just a trifle vain, I ween,—
Showing his new suit to his "dad,"
As male birds their fine feathers preen.
His curls had such a golden sheen,
And by his crib on bended knee
I'd pray God's love from harm would screen
My little boy that used to be!

ENVOY

O son upon whose strength I lean,
Be very patient, dear, with me,
For mothers miss with anguish keen
The little boy that used to be!

Anne P. L. Field.

MOTHER MINE

YOU nursed me through my infant years,
You loved me as a child,
You shared with me my hopes and fears,
With counsels good and mild,
And when my erring footsteps strayed,
How sad that heart of thine,
You loved me better than before,
Dear Mother, Mother mine.

Anonymous.

BOYHOOD

AH, then how sweetly closed those crowded days!
The minutes parting one by one, like rays
That fade upon a summer's eve.
But O, what charm or magic numbers

Can give me back the gentle slumbers
  Those weary, happy days did leave?
When by my bed I saw my mother kneel,
  And with her blessing took her nightly kiss;
  Whatever time destroys, he cannot this;
E'en now that nameless kiss I feel.

Washington Allston.

NO OTHER WORD

THERE'S no other word that's spoken 'neath the starry sky above,
Can so touch our hearts as "Mother" or inspire so pure a love.
It awakened with our being, and in sweet maternal ways,
It was hallowed as 'twas nurtured in our happy childhood days.
In our eyes and thoughts no other has so kind and saintly face,
And of all we fondly cherish, none can ever fill her place.

E. B. Grimes.

LITTLE MAN

LITTLE MAN! Little Man! come to me now!
  Come, let me hold you tight!
I will fold you away in the nest of my heart,
  Far from all harm to-night—
Deep in my heart is a garden
  Of lilies of love, and they glow
In the light, blooming into an Eden
  That only a mother can know.

Little Man! Little Man! close your dear eyes;
I'll sing you off to sleep,
While mystical elfins of babyhood dreams
Hover about you, and creep
Ever so lightly to lead you
Into the realm where love
Dimples your pathway with kisses
As pure as the dew from above.

Little Man! Little Man! now you are safe,
Forever safe on my breast,
Your heart in my heart is embedded,
And night croons a song of rest,
Rest while the beautiful lilies
Of love guard your slumber and glow
In the light of an earthly Eden
That only a mother can know.

Anonymous.

LONGING

HOW often in the after years when time
Has touched us whitely with his frosty rime
In silent moments never spoken of
We long to know again a mother's love.

Bright gold, hard labor's guerdon, may be ours
And fame have brought us satisfying dowers,
Yet in the moment when our life has all—
All would we give to hear her gently call.

When fevered with the fret of life and toil,
The strife of living, and the day's turmoil,
How do we yearn, so deeply and so much,
To feel again the healing of her touch.

When bitter in defeat, by failure stung,
When from the heart, hot, careless words are flung,
How thoughts bring back, our dark moods to beguile,
The pleased, reproving laughter in her smile!

Ah, mothers, little do you know or guess
How in our secret hearts your name we bless;
How you are present through life's joys and tears,
Forgotten not through life's increasing years!

Arthur Wallace Peach.

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HER WORDS AND PRAYERS

SHE led me first to God;
Her words and prayers were my young spirit's dew—
For when she us'd to leave
The fireside every eve,
I knew it was for prayer that she withdrew.
How often has the thought
Of my mourn'd mother brought
Peace to my troubled spirit, and new power
The tempter to repel!
Mother, thou knowest well
That thou hast bless'd me since my natal hour.

John Pierpont.

MY MOTHER

THE sweetest face in all the world to me,
Set in a frame of shining silver hair,
With eyes whose language is fidelity;
This is my mother. Is she not most fair?

O mother! in the changeful years now flown,
Since, as a child, I leant upon your knee,
Life has not brought to me, nor fortune shown,
Such tender love! such yearning sympathy!

Let fortune smile or frown, whiche'er she will;
It matters not, I scorn her fickle ways!
I never shall be quite bereft until
I lose my mother's honest blame and praise!

Mary Riley Smith.

MOTHER'S WORLD

EYES of blue and hair of gold,
Cheeks all brown with summer tan,
Lips that much of laughter hold,
That is mother's little Man.

Shining curls like chestnut brown,
Long-lashed eyes, demure and staid,
Sweetest face in all the town,
That is mother's little Maid.

Dainty room with snow-white bed,
Where, two flowers with petals curled,
Rest in peace two dreaming heads,
That is mother's little World.

Margaret Alden.

A MOTHER UNDERSTANDS

WHEN mother sits beside my bed
At night, and strokes and smooths my head,
And kisses me, I think, some way,
How naughty I have been all day;
Of how I waded in the brook,
And of the cookies that I took,
And how I smashed a window light
A-rassling—me and Bobby White—
And tore my pants, and told a lie;
It almost makes me want to cry
When mother pats and kisses me;
I'm just as sorry as can be,
But I don't tell her so—no, sir.
She knows it all; you can't fool her.

Anonymous.

MOTHER

EARLY one summer morning,
I saw two children pass,
Their footsteps slow, yet lithesome,
Scarce bent the tender grass.
One lately out of babyhood
Looked up with eager eyes;

The other watched her wistfully
  Oppressed with smothered sighs.
"See, mother," cried the little one,
  "I gathered them for you,
The sweetest flowers and lilies,—
  And *Mabel* has some too."
"Hush, Nellie," whispered Mabel,
  "We have not reached it yet,
Wait till we get there, my darling,
  It isn't far, my pet."
"Get where?" asked Nellie, "tell me."
  "To the church-yard," Mabel said.
"No! no!" cried little Nellie,
  And shook her sunny head.
Still Mabel whispered sadly,
  "We must take them to the grave,
Come, darling"; and the childish voice
  Tried to be clear and brave.
But Nellie still kept calling
  Far up into the blue:
"See, mother, see how pretty!
  We gathered them for you."

And when her sister pleaded,
  And cried and would not go—
"Angels don't live in church-yards;
  My mother don't, I know."

Then Mabel bent and kissed her.
  "So be it, dear," she said,
"We'll take them to the arbor
  And lay them there instead,

For mother loved it dearly,
  It was the sweetest place!"
And the joy that came to Nellie
  Shone up in Mabel's face.

I saw them turn and follow
  A path with blossoms bright
Until the nodding branches
  Concealed them from my sight.
But still, like sweetest music,
  The winds came ringing through:
"See, mother, see how pretty!
  We gathered them for you."

Mary Mapes Dodge.

MY MOTHER AT THE GATE

OH, there's many a lovely picture
  On memory's silent wall,
There's many a cherished image
  That I tenderly recall!
The sweet home of my childhood,
  With its singing brooks and birds,
The friends who grew around me,
  With their loving books and words;
The flowers that decked the wildwood,
  The roses fresh and sweet,
The blue-bells and the daisies
  That blossomed at my feet—
All, all are very precious,
  And often come to me,

Like breezes from that country
That shines beyond death's sea.
But the sweetest, dearest image
That fancy can create
Is the image of my mother,
My mother at the gate.

Matilda C. Edwards.

THE THINGS IN THE BOTTOM DRAWER

THERE are whips and tops and pieces of strings,
There are shoes which no little feet wear,
There are bits of ribbon and broken things,
And tresses of golden hair;
There are little dresses folded away
Out of the light of the sunny day.

There are dainty jackets that never are worn,
There are toys and models of ships,
There are books and pictures all faded and torn,
And marked by the finger-tips
Of dimpled hands that have fallen to dust;
Yet I strive to think that the Lord is just.

But a feeling of bitterness fills my soul
Sometimes, when I try to pray,
That a Reaper has spared so many flowers
And taken mine away;
And I almost doubt if the Lord can know
That a mother's heart can love them so.

And then I think of my children two—
  My babes that never grew old;
To know they are waiting and watching for you,
  In the city with streets of gold!
Safe, safe from the cares of the weary years,
  From sorrow and sin and war;
And I thank my God with falling tears
  For the things in the bottom drawer.

Anonymous.

MATERNAL LOVE

MATERNAL love! thou word that sums all bliss,
  Gives and receives all bliss,—fullest when most
Thou givest! spring-head of all felicity,
Deepest when most is drawn! emblem of God!
O'erflowing most when greatest numbers drink!

Robert Pollok.

MOTHER

O WONDER-WORD! That throbs and thrills
  Through heart of man and ever fills
The universe with endless song
Echoing from angelic throng!

Its magic quiets human pain;
It bids the hopeless hope again;
It stills the helpless infant's cry,
Gives strength to live; gives faith to die.

First friend of joy! Last at the cross!
Joy of our gain! Comfort for loss!
The peaceful gift—to earth-born given;
Love of the Heart, of Home, of Heaven!

Emily Selinger.

O MAGICAL WORD

O MAGICAL word may it never die from the lips that
love to speak it,
Nor melt away from the trusting hearts that even would
break to keep it.
Was there ever a name that lived like thine? will there
ever be another?
The angels have reared in heaven a shrine to the holy name
of Mother.

Anonymous.

NE'ER SHALL I FORGET

DEAR mother! ne'er shall I forget
Thy brow, thine eye, thy pleasant smile;
Though in the sea of death hath set
Thy star of life, my guide awhile,
Oh, never shall thy form depart
From the bright pictures in my heart.

And like a bird that from the flowers,
Wing-weary seeks her wonted nest,
My spirit e'en in manhood's hours,
Turns back in childhood's Home to rest;
The cottage, garden, hill, and stream,
Still linger like a pleasant dream.

And while to one engulfing grave
By Time's swift tide we're driven,
How sweet the thought that every wave
But bears us nearer Heaven!
There we shall meet, when life is o'er
In that blest Home, to part no more.

William Goldsmith Brown.

THE MOURNING MOTHER

(*Of the Dead Blind*)

I

DOST thou weep, mourning mother,
For thy blind boy in the grave?
That no more with each other,
Sweet counsel ye can have?—
That he, left dark by nature,
Can never more be led
By thee, maternal creature,
Along smooth paths instead?
That thou canst no more show him
The sunshine, by the heat:
The river's silver flowing,
By murmurs at his feet?
The foliage by its coolness;
The roses, by their smell;
And all creation's fulness,
By Love's invisible?
Weepest thou to behold not
His meek blind eyes again,—

Closed doorways which were folded,
  And prayed against in vain—
And under which, sate smiling
  The child-mouth evermore,
As one who watcheth, wiling
  The time by, at the door?
And weepest thou to feel not
  His clinging hand in thine—
Which now, at dream-time, will not
  Its cold touch disentwine?
And weepest thou still ofter,
  Oh, never more to mark
His low soft words, made softer
  By speaking in the dark?
Weep on, thou mourning mother!

II

But since to him when living
  Thou wast both sun and moon,
Look o'er his grave, surviving
  From a high sphere alone.
Sustain that exaltation,
  Expand that tender light,
And hold in mother-passion
  Thy Blessèd in thy sight.
See how he went out straightway
  From the dark world he knew,—
No twilight in the gateway
  To mediate 'twixt two,—
Into the sudden glory,
  Out of the dark he trod,

Departing from before thee
  At once to light and God!—
For the first face, beholding
  The Christ's in its divine,
For the first place, the golden
  And tideless hyaline;
With trees, as lasting summer,
  That rock to songful sound,
While angels, the new-comer,
  Wrap a still smile around.
Oh, in the blessed psalm now,
  His happy voice he tries,
Spreading a thicker palm-bough,
  Than others o'er his eyes!
Yet still, in all the singing,
  Thinks haply of thy song
Which, in his life's first springing,
  Sang to him all night long;
And wishes it beside him,
  With kissing lips that cool
And soft did overglide him,
  To make the sweetness full.
Look up, O mourning mother,
  Thy blind boy walks in light!
Ye wait for one another,
  Before God's infinite.
But thou art now the darkest,
  Thou mother left below—
Thou, the sole blind,—thou markest,
  Content that it be so,—

Until ye two have meeting
  Where Heaven's pearl gate is,
And *he* shall lead thy feet in,
  As once thou leddest *his*.
Wait on, thou mourning mother.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

WITH LOVE—FROM MOTHER

THERE'S a letter on the bottom of the pile,
  Its envelope a faded yellow brown,
It has traveled to the city many a mile,
  And the postmark names a little unknown town.

But the hurried man of business pushes all the others by,
And on the scrawly characters he turns a glistening eye,
He forgets the cares of commerce and his anxious schemes
    for gain,
The while he reads what mother writes from up in Maine.

There are quirks and scratchy quavers of the pen
  Where it struggled in the fingers old and bent.
There are places that he has to read again
  And ponder on to find what mother meant.

There are letters on his table that enclose some bouncing
    checks;
There are letters giving promises of profits on his "specs."
But he tosses all the litter by, forgets the golden rain,
Until he reads what mother writes from up in Maine.

At last he finds "with love—we are all well,"
  And softly lays the homely letter down,
And dashes at his headlong tasks pellmell,
  Once more the busy, anxious man of town.

But whenever in his duties as the rushing moments fly
That faded little envelope smiles up to meet his eye,
He turns again to labor with a stronger, truer brain,
From thinking on what mother wrote from up in Maine.

Through all the day he dictates brisk replies,
  To his amanuensis at his side,—
The curt and stern demand, and business lies,—
  The doubting man cajoled, and threat defied.

And then at dusk when all are gone, he drops his worldly mask
And takes his pen and lovingly performs a welcome task;
For never shall the clicking type or shortened scrawl profane
The message to the dear old home up there in Maine.

Holman F. Day.

MOTHER'S ROCKING-CHAIR

ONCE upon a time she'd take me—
  Take me in her arms each night;
Softly croon a song of slumber,
  Bid me close my eyes so tight;
For she said: "The Sandman's coming!"
  Then I knew I must beware,
Lest he catch me with them open,
  As we rocked in that old chair.

Long that's been; I'm worn and weary,
And I would that I could rest
With her arms entwined around me,
And my head upon her breast.
She would croon to me so softly,
And she'd gently stroke my hair;
While I'd drift away to Dreamland,
Rocked to sleep in that old chair.

But that chair has long been empty—
Where it is I do not know;
And the songs she sang so sweetly,
Were forgotten long ago.
But to-night I feel her presence—
Seem to see her face so fair,
And to hear her softly crooning
In that old, old rocking-chair.

Harry M. Dean.

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HOW'S MY BOY?

"HO, Sailor of the sea!
How's my boy—my boy?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sail'd he?"
"My boy John—
He that went to sea—
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy's my boy to me.
You come back from sea,
And not know of my John?

I might as well have ask'd some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

"How's my boy—my boy?
And unless you let me know
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass buttons or no, sailor,
Anchor or crown or no!
Sure his ship was the '*Jolly Briton*'"—
"Speak low, woman, speak low!"
"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor?
I was never aboard her.
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound,
Her owners can afford her!
I say how's my John?"
"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."
"How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the men, sailor?

I'm not their mother—
How's my boy—my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How's my boy—my boy?"

Sidney Dobell.

AS ONE WHO STANDS

AS one who stands at evening by the ocean's lonely shore
May hear the voice of Memory above the breakers' roar,
So, calm and clear and beautiful as bells for curfew rung,
I hear above life's surge and flow the songs my mother sung.

Anonymous.

NO MATTER

NO matter how far from the right she hath strayed;
No matter what inroads dishonor hath made;
No matter what elements cankered the pearl—
Though tarnished and sullied, she is some mother's girl.

No matter how wayward his footsteps have been;
No matter how deep he is sunken in sin;
No matter how low is his standard of joy;—
Though guilty and loathsome, he is some mother's boy.

That head hath been pillowed on some tender breast;
That form hath been wept o'er, those lips have been pressed;
That soul hath been prayed for, in tones sweet and mild
For her sake deal gently with—some mother's child.

Francis L. Keeler.

MOTHER'S WAY

WHENEVER I am bad all day
Until I'm really 'shamed to pray,
I wait till mother comes to say
"Good night, dear child." That's mother's way.

And then, somehow, I don't know why,
I tell her everything and cry.
She hugs me then, and right away
I feel less sad. That's mother's way.

And mother kneels down by my bed
And pulls my face close to her head,
And we both snuggle down and pray,
That's why I'm glad for mother's way.

Anonymous.

AMONG THE NAMES

AMONG the names to mortals given
There's none like mother, home, and heaven;
For home's no home without her care;
And heaven, we know she will be there;
Then let us, while we love each other,
Remember and be kind to mother.

E. L. Cassauria.

MY MENDING BASKET

IT is made of the stoutest of willow;
It is deep and capacious and wide;
Yet the Gulf Stream that flows through its borders
Seems always to stand at flood-tide!

And the garments lie heaped on each other:
I look at them often and sigh;
Shall I ever be able to grapple
With a pile that has grown two feet high?

There's a top-layer, always, of stockings;
These arrive and depart every day;
And the things that are playing "button-button"
Also leave without any delay.

But oh, underneath there are strata
Buried deep as the earth's eocene!
Things put there the first of the autumn,
Still there when the trees have grown green.

There are things to be ripped and made over;
There are things that gave out in their prime;
There are intricate tasks—all awaiting
One magical hour of "spare time."

Will it come? Shall I ever possess it?
I start with fresh hope every day.
Like a will-o-the wisp it allures me;
Like a will-o-the-wisp fades away.

For the basket has never been empty,
During all of its burdened career,
But for once, for a few fleeting moments,
When the baby upset it, last year!

Bessie Chandler.

NOBODY KNOWS—BUT MOTHER

NOBODY knows of the work it makes
To keep the home together,
Nobody knows of the steps it takes,
Nobody knows—but mother.

Nobody listens to childish woes,
Which kisses only smother;
Nobody's pained by naughty blows,
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the sleepless care
Bestowed on baby brother;
Nobody knows of the tender prayer,
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the lessons taught
Of loving one another;
Nobody knows of the patience sought,
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the anxious fears,
Lest darling may not weather
The storm of life in after years,
Nobody knows—but mother.

Nobody kneels at the throne above
To Thank the Heavenly Father
For the sweetest gift—a mother's love;
Nobody can—but mother.

Anonymous.

WANT TO BE WHUR MOTHER IS

"WANT to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Jeemses Rivers! won't some one ever shet that howl o' his?
That-air yellin' drives me wild!
Cain't none of ye stop the child?
Want yer Daddy? "Naw." Gee Whizz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Coax him, Sairy! Mary, sing somepin' fer him! Lift him, Liz—
Bang the clock-bell with the key—
Er the *meat-ax!* Gee-mun-nee!
Listen to them lungs o' his!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Preacher guess'll pound all night on that old pulpit o' his;
'Pears to me some wimmin' jist
Shows religious interest
Mostly 'fore their fambly's riz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

. . . . . .

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Nights like these and whipperwills allus brings that voice of his!

Sairy; Mary; 'Lizabeth;
Don't set there and ketch yer death
In the dew—er rheumatiz—
Want to be whur mother is?

James Whitcomb Riley.

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MY MOTHER

I KNOW a dear old lady
Whose voice is soft and low;
Her face is like some picture,
A dream of long ago.

She is not great or famous,
Nor known in realms of art,
But she is rich in treasures
Which gild a kindly heart.

To see her is to bless her;
Her praise is on each tongue;
She's friends in all the aged,
And "lovers in the young."

Her life's a living sermon
Of hope and gentle facts—
A text for human nature,
That's found in loving acts!

She fills her world with kindness,
  It brightens every spot.
She has her earthly sorrows,
  But yet of earth is not.

She's patient, pure, and happy,
  In these her twilight days;
Her lips are ever ready
  To comfort or to praise.

Her soul's a gleam of sunshine,
  A rainbow of Life's showers;
Her presence is a garden
  Of ever-blowing flowers,

Which Time can never wither,
  For recollections rare
Shall bloom around her Memory,
  And twine Love's garlands there.

William Lawrence Chittenden.

From "Ranch Verses."

SOMETHING BETTER

TEN little heads have found their sweetest rest
  Upon the pillow of her loving breast;
The world is wide; yet nowhere does it keep
  So safe a haven, so secure a rest.

'Tis counted something great to be a queen
  And bend a kingdom to a woman's will.
To be a mother such as mine, I ween,
  Is something better and more noble still.

Mary Riley Smith.

THE MOTHER

PALER, and yet a thousand times more fair
Than in thy girlhood's freshest bloom, art thou:
A softer sun-flush tints thy golden hair,
A sweeter grace adorns thy gentle brow.
Lips that shall call thee "Mother!" at thy breast
Feed the young life, wherein thy nature feels
Its dear fulfillment: little hands are pressed
On the white fountain Love alone unseals.

Look down, and let Life's tender daybreak throw
A second radiance on thy ripened hour:
Retrace thy own forgotten advent so,
And in the bud behold thy perfect flower.
. . . . . .

The father in his child beholds this truth,
His perfect manhood has assumed its reign:
Thou wear'st anew the roses of thy youth,—
The mother in her child is born again.

Bayard Taylor.

MY HEART GREW SOFTER

MY heart grew softer as I gazed upon
That youthful mother, as she soothed to rest
With a low song, her lov'd and cherish'd one,
The bud of promise on her gentle breast;

For 'tis a sight that angel ones above
  May stoop to gaze on from their bowers of bliss,
When Innocence upon the breast of Love
  Is cradled, in a sinful world like this.

A. B. Welby.

MOTHER'S KISSES

THEY'RE good for bumps, and good for lumps,
  They're even good for dumps and grumps,
They're good for stings of "bumble-bees"
  And barks from "shinnying" cherry-trees.
For splinters, sun-burn, "skeeter-bites,"
  For 'injured feelings" after fights,
And scratches, scratched while Tabby hisses—
    Mother's kisses.

There's naught so pure, there's naught so sure,
  Indeed, they seem a heavenly cure,
For pounded fingers, and stubbed toes,
  And all the long, long list of woes,
Yet did you ever think it queer
  That while they're fine for every fear
They're just as fine with all the blisses—
    Mother's kisses.

Annie Balcomb Wheeler.

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THE BOOK OF BOOKS

WE search the world for truth; we cull the good, the
pure, the beautiful
From graven stone and written scroll, from all old flower
fields of the soul.
And, weary seekers of the best, we come back laden from
our quest,
To find that all the sages said is in the book our Mothers
read.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

MY MOTHER

YOU painted no Madonnás
On chapel walls in Rome;
But with a touch diviner,
You lived one in your home.

You wrote no lofty poems
That critics counted art;
But with a nobler vision,
You lived them in your heart.

You carved no shapeless marble
To some high soul-design;
But with a finer sculpture,
You shaped this soul of mine.

You built no great cathedrals
That centuries applaud;
But with a grace exquisite,
Your life cathedraled God.

Had I the gift of Raphael
Or Michelangelo
Oh, what a rare Madonna
My mother's life should show!

Thomas W. Fessenden.

MY MOTHER'S VOICE

MY Mother's voice, how often creeps
Its cadence on my lonely hours!
Like healing sent on wings of sleep,
Or dew to the unconscious flowers.
I can forget her melting prayer
When leaping pulses madly fly,
But in the still, unbroken air
Her gentle tone comes stealing by,
And years, and sin, and manhood flee,
And leave me at my Mother's knee.

Nathaniel P. Willis.

REMEMBRANCES

WOULD, Mother, thou couldst hear me tell
How oft, amid my brief career,
For sins and follies loved too well,
Hath fallen the free, repentant tear.

And, in the waywardness of youth,
How better thoughts have given to me
Contempt for error, love for truth,
'Mid sweet remembrances of thee.

James Aldrich.

THE GOODEST MOTHER

EVENING was falling, cold and dark,
And people hurried along the way
As if they were longing soon to mark
Their own home candle's cheering ray.

Before me toiled in the whirling wind
A woman with bundles great and small,
And after her tugged, a step behind,
The Bundle she loved the best of all.

A dear little roly-poly boy
With rosy cheeks, and a jacket blue,
Laughing and chattering full of joy,
And here's what he said—I tell you true:

"You're the goodest mother that ever was."
A voice as clear as a forest bird's;
And I'm sure the glad young heart had cause
To utter the sweet of the lovely words.

Perhaps the woman had worked all day
Washing or scrubbing; perhaps she sewed;
I knew, by her weary footfall's way,
That life for her was an uphill road.

But here was a comfort. Children dear,
Think what a comfort you might give
To the very best friend you can have here,
The lady fair in whose house you live,
If once in a while you'd stop and say,—
In task or play for a moment pause,
And tell her in sweet and winning way,
"You're the GOODEST mother that ever was."

Anonymous.

SOMEBODY'S DARLING

INTO a ward of the whitewashed halls,
Where the dead and dying lay,
Wounded by bayonets, shells, and balls,
Somebody's darling was borne one day;

Somebody's darling, so young and brave,
Wearing yet on his pale, sweet face,
Soon to be hid by the dust of the grave,
The lingering light of his boyhood's grace.

Matted and damp are the curls of gold,
Kissing the snow of that fair young brow;
Pale are the lips of delicate mold—
Somebody's darling is dying now.

Back from his beautiful, blue-veined brow,
Brush all the wandering waves of gold;
Cross his hands on his bosom now;
Somebody's darling is still and cold.

Kiss him once for somebody's sake,
Murmur a prayer soft and low;
One bright curl from its fair mates take;
They were somebody's pride, you know.

Somebody's hand has rested there;
Was it a mother's, soft and white?
And have the lips of a sister fair
Been baptized in the waves of light?

God knows best! he was somebody's love:
Somebody's heart enshrined him there;
Somebody wafted his name above,
Night and morn, on the wings of prayer.

Somebody wept when he marched away,
Looking so handsome, brave, and grand;
Somebody's kiss on his forehead lay;
Somebody clung to his parting hand.

Somebody's watching and waiting for him,
Yearning to hold him again to her heart;
And there he lies, with his blue eyes dim,
And the smiling, child-like lips apart.

Tenderly bury the fair young dead,
Pausing to drop on his grave a tear;
Carve on the wooden slab at his head,
"Somebody's darling slumbers here."

Anonymous.

MY MOTHER

I NEVER call that gentle name,
My mother! but I am again
E'en as a child; the very same
That prattled at thy knee; and fain
Would I forget, in momentary joy,
That I no more can be thy happy boy.

I've lived through foreign lands to roam,
And gazed on many a classic scene;
But oft the thought of that dear home,
Which once was ours, would intervene,
And bid me close again my languid eye,
To think of thee and those sweet days gone by.

I've pored o'er many a yellow page
Of ancient wisdom, and have won
Perchance a scholar's name; yet sage
Or poet ne'er have taught thy son
Lessons so pure, so fraught with holy truth,
As those his mother's faith shed o'er his youth.

George W. Bethune.

REMEMBRANCE

I THINK that we retain of our dead friends
And absent ones no general portraiture;
That perfect memory does not long endure,
But fades and fades until our own life ends.
Unconsciously, forgetfulness attends
That grief for which there is no cure,

But leaves of each lost one some record sure,—
A look, an act, a tone,—something that lends
Relief and consolation, not regret.
Even that poor mother mourning her dead child,
Whose agonizing eyes with tears are wet,
Whose bleeding heart cannot be reconciled
Unto the grave's embrace,—even she shall yet
Remember only when her babe first smiled!

John H. Bonner.

THE WAYS OF LOVE

I HOLD that this is true—
From lads in love with their mothers
Our bravest heroes grew.
Earth's grandest hearts have been loving hearts,
Since time and earth began;
And the boy who kissed his mother
Is every inch a man!

Anonymous.

A REMEMBERED FACE

ON Euripides' plays we debated,
In College, one chill winter night;
A student rose up, while we waited
For more intellectual light.
As he stood, pale and anxious, before us,
Three words, like a soft summer wind,
Went past us and through us and o'er us—
A whisper low-breathed: "He is blind!"

And in many a face there was pity,
  And in many an eye there were tears;
For his words were not buoyant and witty,
  As fitted his fresh summer years.
And he spoke once or twice, as none other
  Could speak, of a woman's pure ways—
He remembered the face of his mother
  Ere darkness had blighted his days.

Edmund John Armstrong.

MOTHER AND CHILD

CHARLES, my slow heart was only sad, when first
  I scanned that face of feeble infancy;
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my babe might be!
But when I saw it on its Mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile),
Then I was thrilled and melted, and most warm
Impressed a Father's kiss; and all beguiled
Of dark remembrance, and presageful fear,
I seemed to see an Angel's form appear—
'Twas even thine, beloved Woman mild!
So for the Mother's sake the Child was dear,
And dearer was the Mother for the Child.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

A THREAD OF HAIR

HERE, in her old work-basket—
Now that my mother's gone—
I find a thread of silver—
A single hair alone.

Than filigree more slender;
And yet that thread is strong
To draw my heart and crush it,
Till tears are all its song.

I knew when her locks were golden,
And here, night after night,
Over this old work-basket,
I saw them change to white.

This little thread surviving,
That tender mother gone!—
What wonder I am weeping
As I sit here alone!

Christopher Bannister.

AS YOU USED TO DO

THE ways of love and tenderness
Are never out of style;
Remember this and tell her so—
Don't wait till after a while.

Let not affection wane with years;
It waneth not for you.
Go, put your arms around her now—
Kiss her as you used to do.

Anonymous.

MATRES DOLOROSAE

YE Spartan mothers, gentle ones,
Of lion-hearted, loving sons,
Fal'n, the flower of English youth,
To a barbarous foe in a land uncouth:—

O what a delicate sacrifice!
Unequal the stake and costly the price
As when the queen of Love deplor'd
Her darling by the wild-beast gor'd.

They rode to war as if to the hunt,
But ye at home, ye bore the brunt,
Bore the siege of torturing fears,
Fed your hope on the bread of tears.

Proud and spotless warriors they
With love or sword to lead the way;
For ye had cradled heart and hand,
The commander harken'd to your command.

Ah, weeping mothers, now all is o'er,
Ye know your honor and mourn no more:
Nor ask ye a name in England's story,
Who gave your dearest for her glory.

Robert Bridges.

Permission of the Author.
From the one volume edition of the Poems
of Robert Bridges,
Oxford University Press.

BEING A MOTHER

I THOUGHT a child was given to sanctify
A woman, set her in the sight of all
The clear-eyed heavens, a chosen Minister
To do their business, and lead spirits up
The difficult blue heights. A woman lives
Not bettered, quickened toward the truth and good
Through being a mother?—then she's none.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

"A GLORIOUS END"

(Title of picture by English war artist)

THE soldier tells of that fierce charge
In which his hero brother died:
The father stands with lifted head
As if he saw the splendid ride,
The sister hears with face grown pale
And eyes that brim with tears of pride;
The mother does not heed the tale,—
She only knows that he has died.

. . . . . .

Their words are but an idle tale
  Of war and battle, sword and gun;
She has not heard that he was brave,
  She does not care what he has done;
She only turns her head aside,
  She has no thought for glory won,
She only knows that he has died,—
  Her son—her son—her firstborn son.

Annie Johnson Flint.

From "The Springfield Republican."

THE MOTHER-HUNGER

IF I could only find her—for the mother-hunger's on me;
  I want to see and touch her, to know her close beside;
I want to put my head in the hollow of her shoulder,
  I want to feel her love for me as she did before she died.

In all the world is nothing, nothing of husband and children,
  In all the world is nothing that can soothe me or can stir
Like the memory of her fragile hand on which the ring
      was slipping—
  The hand that wakes my longing at the very thought
      of her.

The window in the sunshine and the empty chair beside it,
  The loneliness that mocks me as I find the sacred place!
Oh, mother, is there naught in the unerring speech of silence
  To let me know your presence, though I cannot see your
      face?

Oh, no, I've not forgotten the triumph and the glory—
I would not bring you back again to struggle and to pain.
This hour will pass; but, oh, just now, the mother-hunger's on me,
And I would give my soul to-night to kiss your hair again.

Anonymous.

A LULLABY

CLOSE to the heart that is throbbing in love for you,
Innocent, sleep.
Mother love watches in tenderness over you,
Quietly sleep.
Circled by arms that are guarding thy purity,
While from the ocean great waves of futurity
Impotent break on thy bars of security,
Little one, sleep.

Fresh from the portals of Heaven's infinity,
Peacefully rest.
Peace was thy gift from the hand of Divinity—
Exquisite rest.
Tuned is the heart to the heavenly harmony,
Love hath imprinted its ravishing charm on thee,
Innocent soul, with no vestige of harm in thee,
Sweet is thy rest.

Willis Walton Franz.

REPRIEVE

TEMPESTS and clouds made dark the day
For fitful Madge and me;
At length repentance had its way,
And brought her to my knee.

The softened eyes revealed a tear,
But hope is brave at ten.
"Will you forgive me, mother dear?
Can I begin again?"

"Oh child," I said, with weary sigh,
"Too often you begin."
"Yes, mother"; and the calm reply
Showed victory within.

In this remorseful heart sank deep
My lambkin's pleading glance:
What if the Shepherd of the sheep
Denied me one more chance?

Mary Thacher Higginson.

GONE TO SCHOOL

THE baby has gone to school; ah me!
What will the mother do,
With never a call to button or pin,
Or tie a little shoe?
How can she keep herself busy all day,
With the little hindering thing away?

Another basket to fill with lunch,
  Another good-by to say,
And the mother stands at the door to see
  Her baby march away,
And turns with a sigh that is half relief,
And half a something akin to grief.

She thinks of a possible future morn,
  When the children, one by one,
Will go from their home out into the world,
  To battle with life alone,
And not even the baby be left to cheer
The desolate home of that future year.

She picks up garments here and there,
  Thrown down in careless haste;
And tries to think how it would seem
  If nothing were displaced:
If the house were always as still as this,
How could she bear the loneliness?

Anonymous.

THOUGH THE MILES DIVIDE US

AND though the miles divide us, we'll still walk hand in hand,
For mother heart or child heart will all things understand.
No matter where I journey, or what my life shall fill,
My heart shall yet be loyal—thou art my mother still.

Edwin Osgood Grover.

IN A DARK HOUR

THOSE tender mothers! When such little things,
Such helpless, fragile little things we are,—
How they pray God for us! How they make war
For us with death! and spread their mother-wings
About us full of anxious quiverings,
And spying each least peril from afar,
With their own arms, thereto made mighty, bar
The way from harms and smile at adder-stings,
And brave the tigers merciless and wild,
In their deep love for us; and by and by,
When we are men, to strive and stand alone,
We clasp our desperate, aching heads and moan;
Would God my mother had left me to die!
Would I had died a sinless little child!

Gertrude Hall.

From "The Century Magazine."

MOTHER

NOT a great lady, this mother of mine,
Easy through social graces,
But her eyes oft shine with a light divine,
As they gaze full of tenderness into mine,
And her spirit is lucid, clear, and fine
As angels in heavenly places.

Delicate, fragile, weak she is not,
Mother who has loved me long;

Her strong back's bent leaning o'er the cot
As child after child there fell to her lot;
And she thanked the good God for the children she got,
  And burdens she bore with a song.

Not white nor tiny is mother's hand—
  It's reddened and knotted with toil;
But the gentlest zephyr from fairy's wand,
Nor the softest snowflake in all the land,
Is so gentle and soft as mother's hand
  When fevers begin to boil.

I thank Thee, God, for her Thou hast given
  To me, a man of the sod;
For me she has prayed and hoped and striven,
For me her heart has oft been riven;
O make me worthy of her and heaven,
  And count me a son of God!

Titus Lowe.

A TOAST TO OUR MOTHERS

NOW, boys, just a moment! you've all had your say
  While enjoying yourselves in so pleasant a way;
We've toasted our sweethearts, our friends, and our wives;
We've toasted each other, wishing all merry lives—
Here's to one in a million, the dearest, the best,
Like the sun in the heavens, she outshines the rest!
Don't frown when I tell you this toast beats all others,
But drink one more toast, boys, a toast to "Our Mothers!"

Anonymous.

A MOTHER'S HEART

LOVE! Love!—there are soft smiles and gentle words,
And there are faces, skillful to put on the look we
trust in—and 'tis mockery all. . . .
There is none in all this cold and hollow world, no font
Of deep, strong, deathless love save that within
A Mother's heart.

Felicia Hemans.

BY THE EVENING FIRE

IF mothers by their failings were condemned,
Oh, what an orphaned planet this would be!
That's not its fate. Their loving makes amend
For all the tale of their deficiency.
Though tempers by the long day's cares are tried,
And sharp words sometimes fall, and tears ensue;
Though hasty tongues unseasonably chide,
And little faults look bigger than is true—
Comes evening and anew with strength equips
Love's steady current strenuous to bless.
Smoothed, then, Care's lines by childish fingertips;
Cured the heart pangs by childhood's warm caress.
Clasped in the mother's arms, close to her breast,
Wrapped in her love, the restful child finds rest.

E. S. Martin.

From "Scribner's Magazine."

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

SO many cares to burden all the day,
So many wounds to bind, and hurts to heal,
So many steps to guide along the way,
So much for hands to do and hearts to feel.
Thou knowest, Lord, how weary mothers grow;
How at the close of day, we come with lagging feet
And ofttimes aching head, to ask Thy help
Just to keep sweet.

The cup of little things, things that worry so,
Comes often to a mother's lips to drink.
The griefs and joys that only mothers know
Make up her chain of days, forged link by link.
Dear Lord, a mother draws her strength from Thee,
Her wisdom, too, to guide the childish feet;
But always, Lord, our daily need will be
Just to keep sweet.

Helen P. Metzger.

From "The Mother's Magazine."

HOME TO MOTHER

NO matter how far our feet may rove,
When weary and worn in constant strife,
Mother and home are the best of life.

Blessed is he who may smilingly say,
"I'm going home to mother to-day."
God's mercy hallows that home so dear,
Where mother our footsteps waits to hear.

Bless the busy hand and the cheery smile
That brighten and comfort all the while;
Nothing on earth can with home compare
When a loving mother waits us there.

Anonymous.

I AM WEEPING, MOTHER

I AM weeping, mother, in your empty chamber;
Beyond the pane, a fair familiar scene;
As a far dream only may the man remember
All the mirth of childhood that hath been—
Hath been here about thy young joy, O my mother,
All the mirth and laughter of a child.
Was it I, indeed, and not another,
Whom you folded in your dear arms undefiled?
Our nursery with snowy-folded curtain!
Here you came to bless the dreaming boy,
All is melted to a memory uncertain,
Evening prayer, the game, and many a toy.

Roden Noel.

RIZPAH

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea—
And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me!'
Why should he call me to-night, when he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day, and the full moon stares at the snow.

We should be seen, my dear; they would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till I find myself drenched with the rain.

Anything fallen again? nay—what was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have number'd the bones, I have hidden them all.
What am I saying? and what are *you?* do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As the tree falls so must it lie.

Who let her in? how long has she been? you—what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady—none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart, and begun to darken my eyes.

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep—you were only made for the day.
I have gather'd my baby together—and now you may go your way.

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam, to sit by an old dying
wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I have only an hour of
life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before he went out to die.
'They dared me to do it,' he said, and he never has told
me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard once when he was but
a child—
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he said; he was always so
wild—
And idle—and couldn't be idle—my Willy—he never could
rest.
The King should have made him a soldier, he would have
been one of the best.

But he lived with a lot of wild mates, and they never would
let him be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the mail, and he swore
that he would;
And he took no life, but he took one purse, and when all
was done
He flung it among his fellows—'I'll none of it,' said my son.

I came into court to the judge and the lawyers. I told
them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd him, they kill'd him for
robbing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show—we had always
borne a good name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then put away—isn't that
enough shame?

Dust to dust—low down—let us hide! but they set him
so high
That all the ships of the world could stare at him, passing
by.
God 'ill pardon the hell-black raven and horrible fowls
of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer who kill'd him and
hang'd him there.

And the jailer forced me away. I had bid him my last
good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell. 'O mother,' I
heard him cry.
I couldn't get back tho' I tried, he had something further
to say,
And now I shall never know it. The jailer forced me
away.

Then since I couldn't but hear that cry of my boy that
was dead,
They seized me and shut me up; they fasten'd me down on
my bed.
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the dark to me year
after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me—you know that I
couldn't but hear:
And then at last they found I had grown so stupid and
still
They let me abroad again—but the creatures had worked
their will.

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and you, will you call
it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd me, the bones that had
laughed and had cried—
Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not theirs—they had moved
in my side.

Do you think I was scared by the bones? I kiss'd 'em,
I buried 'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the night by the churchyard
wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the trumpet of judgment
'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I laid him in holy
ground.

They would scratch him up—they would hang him again
on the cursed tree.
Sin? O yes, we are sinners, I know—let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the Lord's goodwill toward
men—
'Full of compassion and mercy, the Lord'—let me hear
it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-suffering.' Yes, O,
yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder—the Saviour lives
but to bless.

He'll never put on the black cap except for the worst of
the worst,
And the first may be last—I have heard it in church—and
the last may be first.

Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes, as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the wind and the shower
and the snow.

Heard, have you? what? they have told you he never
repented his sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his mother? are *you* of
his kin?
Heard! have you ever heard, when the storm on the downs
began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and the sea that 'll
moan like a man?

Election, Election, and Reprobation—it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I shall not find him
in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that the Lord has look'd
into my care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy with Willy, I
know not where.

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my* soul, that is all your
desire—
Do you think that I care for *my* soul if my boy be gone to
the fire?
I have been with God in the dark—go, go, you may leave
me alone—
You never have borne a child—you are just as hard as
a stone.

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think that you mean to be
kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for my Willy's voice in
the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he used but to call in
the dark,
And he calls to me now from the church and not from the
gibbet—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is coming—shaking the
walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud—Good-night. I am going.
He calls.

Alfred Tennyson.

MY MOTHER'S HYMN

LIKE patient saint of oldentime, with lovely face almost
divine,
So good, so beautiful and fair, her very attitude a prayer;
I heard her sing so low and sweet,
"His loving kindness—oh, how great!"
Turning, beheld the saintly face, so full of trust and
patient grace.
"He justly claims a song from me, His loving kindness—
oh, how free!"
Sweetly thus did run the song, "His loving kindness"
all day long,
Trusting, praising, day by day, she sang the sweetest
roundelay—

"He near my soul hath always stood
His loving kindness—oh, how good!"
"He safely leads my soul along,
His loving kindness—oh, how strong!"
So strong to lead her on the way
To that eternal better day,
Where safe at last in that blest home,
All care and weariness are gone,
She "sings, with rapture and surprise,
His loving kindness in the skies."

Anonymous.

LIKE A SICK CHILD

LIKE a sick child that knoweth not
His mother while she blesses,
And droppeth on his burning brow
The coolness of her kisses;
And turns his fevered eyes around—
"My mother, where's my mother?"
As if such tender words and looks
Could come from any other.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

A FACTORY GIRL

ONLY a factory girl,
And she works in the noisy mill,
But her hands are deft, and her arms are strong,
And she sings at her work the whole day long,
And she works with a right good will;

For mother at home is growing old,
And mother's house is poor and cold,
  And the wintry winds are chill;
And she longs for the day to quickly come
When mother may have a better home,
  And so she toils in the mill.

Only a factory girl,
  Her mother's hope and stay,
But her love is strong for every one,
Like the glowing beams of the morning sun
  As he ushers in the day.
Her flowers she gives to the sick and poor,
And she always keeps an open door
  For all who come that way.
And for all who live by constant toil,
In mill or mine or on the soil,
  She hopes for a better day.

C. J. Buell.

A MOTHER'S SONG

MOTHER, crooning soft and low,
Let not all thy fancies go,
Like swift birds, to the blue skies
Of thy darling's happy eyes.

Count thy baby's curls for beads,
As a sweet saint intercedes;
But on some fair ringlet's gold
Let a tender prayer be told

For the mother, all alone,
Who for singing maketh moan,
Who doth ever vainly seek
Dimpled arms and velvet cheek.

Mary Frances Butts.

THE FAMILY BIBLE

WHAT household thoughts around thee as their shrine,
Cling reverently! of anxious looks beguiled,
My mother's eyes upon thy page divine,
Each day were bent;—her accents gravely mild,
Breathed out thy lore, whilst I, a dreaming child,
Wandered on breeze-like fancies oft away,
To some lone tuft of gleaming spring-flowers wild,
Some fresh discovered nook for woodland play,
Some secret nest;—yet would the solemn word
At times, with kindlings of young wonder heard,
Fall on my waken'd spirit, there to be
A seed not lost;—for which in darker years,
O book of Heaven! I pour, with grateful tears,
Heart blessings on the holy dead and thee!

Felicia Hemans.

MOTHER

WHEN first I was, the world of sound
Fell strangely on my baby ear;
All meaning blurred, until there came
Your voice, my dear.

And now, where paths of life divide
  In ways I cannot understand,
The blur returns, until I feel
  On mine, your hand.

The sun has set the clouds aflame,
  The rose is perfumed by the dew,
But, miracle of miracles,
  The heart of you!

Anne Herendeen.

From "To-Day's Magazine."

JUST AS A MOTHER

JUST as a mother with sweet, pious face,
  Yearns toward her little children from her seat,
Gives one a kiss, another an embrace,
  Takes this upon her knees, that on her feet;
And while from actions, looks, complaints, pretenses,
  She learns their feeling and their various will,
To this a look, to that a word dispenses,
  And whether stern or smiling, loves them still,—
So Providence for us, high, infinite,
Makes our necessities its watchful task,
  Hearkens to all our prayers, helps all our wants,
And e'en if it denies what seems our right,
Either denies because 'twould have us ask,
  Or seems but to deny, and in denying grants.

Leigh Hunt.

HER OLD-TIME SONG

WHEN I am sad it comes to me,
A tender quiet old strain;
I hear her voice soft, low and sweet,
Take up the song again,
I lean and listen to the sound,—
Were ever notes like those?
Like brooding thrush, at sunset hour,
When day is at its close.

Old, sad and worn, a man of care,
Life grows confused to me;
The things that were I have forgot,
Nor care for things to be.
Yet, through the halls of memory,
Comes back that old, old strain,
I am a boy—my mother sings
Her old-time song again.

Emma M. Johnson.

HIS MOTHER'S SONG

BENEATH the hot midsummer sun
The men had marched all day;
And now beside a rippling stream,
Upon the grass they lay.

Tiring of games and idle jests,
  As swept the hours along,
They called to one who mused apart,
  "Come, friend, give us a song."

"I fear I cannot please," he said;
  "The only songs I know
Are those my mother used to sing
  For me long years ago."

"Sing one of those," a rough voice cried,
  "There's none but true men here;
To every mother's son of us,
  A mother's songs are dear."

. . . . . .

The songs are done, the camp is still,
  Naught but the stream is heard;
But, ah! the depths of every soul
  By those old hymns are stirred.

Anonymous.

THE SONG MY MOTHER SANG

THE melodies of many lands erewhile have charmed mine ear,
Yet there's but one among them all which still my heart holds dear;
I heard it first from lips I loved, my tears it then beguiled,
It was the song my mother sang when I was but a child.

C. W. Glover.

HOUSED

"GOOD-BY, mamma," and forth she flies,
Fit comrade for the radiant day;
A host of groundless fears arise;
Those steps may go astray.

O mother robin, lend me wings
To follow where my birdie goes:
Like thine, she darts away and sings,
Unconscious of her foes.

"Good-night, mamma," the same sweet voice,
Still eager for to-morrow's sun;
While I so earnestly rejoice
The anxious day is done.

My little warbling bird is still;
And yet I love this hour the best;
For there she is, secure from ill,
Within her sheltered nest.

Mary Thacker Higginson.

MOTHERHOOD

SHE softly sings, and paces to and fro,
Patient, unwearied, bearing in her arms
The fretful, sickly child, with all his harms,
Deformed and imbecile, her love and woe,
Croons, with caressing intonation, low,
Some sweet, old minor melody, that charms
The ear that listens, and the sufferer calms
And her own sorrow soothes with silver flow.

O, holy tenderness of motherhood!
Most pitiful and patient to the child,
Foolish, unlovely, seemingly defiled
By powers of death and darkness. The All Good
Alone, so loveth and remembereth,
And, like a tender parent, pitieth.

Abby S. Hinckley.

From "The Century Magazine."

THROUGH A MOTHER'S VOICE

THERE is not a grand inspiring thought,
There is not a truth by wisdom taught,
There is not a feeling pure and high,
That may not be read in a mother's eye.
There are teachings in earth, and sky and air,
The heavens the glory of God declare;
But louder than voice, beneath, above,
He is heard to speak through a mother's love.

Emily Taylor.

TRUST

THE same old baffling questions! O my friend,
I cannot answer them. In vain I send
My soul into the dark where never burn
The lamps of science, nor the natural light
Of reason's sun and stars! I cannot learn
Their great and solemn meaning, nor discern
The awful secrets of the eyes which turn
Evermore on us through day and night,

With silent challenge, and a dumb demand
Proffering the riddle of the dead unknown,
Like the calm Sphinxes, with their eyes of stone,
Questioning the centuries from the vale of sand.
I have no answer for myself or thee
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee;
"All is of God and is to be;
And God is good." Let this suffice us still,
Resting in childlike trust upon His will
Who moves to His great end unthwarted by the ill.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

NOBODY KNOWS BUT MOTHER

HOW many buttons are missing to-day?
How many playthings are strewn in her way?
Nobody knows but mother.
How many thimbles and spools has she missed?
How many burns on each little fist?
How many bumps to be cuddled and kissed?
Nobody knows but mother.

How many stockings to darn, do you know?
How many muddy shoes all in a row?
Nobody knows but mother.
How many little torn aprons to mend?
How many hours of toil must she spend?
What is the time when her day's work shall end?
Nobody knows but mother.

How many cares does a mother-heart know?
How many joys from her mother-love flow?
  Nobody knows but mother.
How many prayers by each little white bed?
How many tears for her babe has she shed?
How many kisses for each curly head?
Nobody knows but mother.

Anonymous.

HIS MOTHER'S FACE

THE light upon his eyelids pricked them wide
  And staring out at us with all their blue,
As half perplexed between the angelhood
He had been away to visit in his sleep,
And our most mortal presence, gradually
He saw his mother's face, accepting it
In change for heaven itself with such a smile
As might have well been learnt there.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

LIKE GOD'S LOVE

LIKE a cradle, rocking, rocking,—silent, peaceful, to
  and fro;
Like a mother's sweet looks dropping on the little face
  below,—
Hangs the green earth swinging, turning, jarless, noiseless,
  safe and slow;
Falls the light of God's face, bending down and watching
  us below.

And as feeble babes that suffer, toss and cry and will
not rest,
Are the ones the tender mother holds the closest,—loves
the best;
So when we are weak and wretched, by our sins weighed
down, distressed,
Then it is God's greatest patience holds us closest, loves
us best.

Saxe Holm.

THE PATTER OF THE RAIN

NOW in memory comes my mother,
As she used long years agone,
To regard the darling dreamers
Ere she left them till the dawn;
Oh, I see her leaning o'er me,
As I list to this refrain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

Coates Kinney.

RATAPLAN

"O RATAPLAN! It is a merry note,
And, mother, I'm for 'listing in the morn."

"And would ye, son, to wear a scarlet coat,
Go leave your mother's latter age forlorn?"

"O mother, I am sick of sheep and goat,
Fat cattle, and the reaping of the corn;

I long to see the British colors float;
For glory, glory, glory, was I born!"

She saw him march. It was a gallant sight.
She blest herself and praised him for a man.
And straight he hurried to the bitter fight,
And found a bullet in the drear Soudan.

They dug a shallow grave—'t was all they might;
And that's the end of glory. "Rataplan!"

Edward Cracroft Lefroy.

MY MOTHER

SUCH a weak, little, tiny body,
To shelter so brave a heart,
Such morsels of hands to labor so long,
And bear such a valiant part
In the battle of life, such diminutive feet
To journey so far and so fast
On the road which leads up from the glimmer of dawn
To the glory of sunset at last.

Yet so great is the power of a woman,
If only her will is strong,
She is mighty to fight and conquer,
(Though the struggle be dreary and long)
With the armies of pain and sorrow,
If her soul be but pure and true,
There is nothing through all the ages,
She has not been able to do.

Anonymous.

THE MOTHER'S PRAYER

DEAR Lord, dear Lord . . . .
Thou, who didst not erst deny
The mother-joy to Mary mild
Blessed in the blessed Child—
Hearkening in meek babyhood
Her cradle hymn, albeit used
To all that music interfused
In breasts of angels high and good.
Oh, take not, Lord, my babe away—
Oh, take not to thy songful heaven,
The pretty babe thou hast given;
Or ere that I have seen him play
Around his father's knees, and known
That he knew how my love hath gone
From all the world to him.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

MOTHER, HOME, AND HEAVEN

THERE are three words that sweetly blend, that on the heart are graven;
A precious, soothing balm they lend—they're Mother, Home, and Heaven.

They form a chain whose every link is free from base alloy;
A stream where whosoever drinks will find refreshing joy!

They build an altar where each day's love's offering is
renewed;
And peace illumes with genial ray life's darkened solitude!

Mary J. Muckle.

BACK AND FORTH IN A ROCKER

BACK and forth in a rocker,
Lost in revery deep,
The mother rocked while trying
To sing the baby to sleep.

The baby began a-crowing,
For silent he couldn't keep—
And after awhile the baby
Had crowed his mother to sleep.

Richard Kendall Munkittrick.

THE HAPPY HOUR

THE busy day is over,
The household work is done;
The cares that fret the morning
Have faded with the sun;
And in the tender twilight,
I sit in happy rest,
With my precious rosy baby
Asleep upon my breast.

White lids with silken fringes
Shut out the waning light;
A little hand close folded,
Holds mamma's fingers tight;

And in their soft white wrappings
At last in perfect rest,
Two dainty feet are cuddled,
Like birdies in a nest.

All hopes and loves unworthy
Fade out at this sweet hour;
All pure and noble longings
Renew their holy power;
For Christ, who in the Virgin
Our motherhood has blest,
Is near to every woman
With a baby on her breast.

Mary Frances Butts.

THE MOTHER IN THE HOUSE

FOR such as you, I do believe,
Spirits their softest carpets weave,
And spread them out with gracious hand
Wherever you walk, wherever you stand.

For such as you, of scent and dew
Spirits their rarest nectar brew,
And where you sit and where you sup
Pour beauty's elixir in your cup.

For all day long, like other folk,
You bear the burden, wear the yoke,

And yet when I look in your eyes at eve
You are lovelier than ever, I do believe.

Hermann Hagedorn.

By the courtesy of
"The Ladies' Home Journal."

MOTHER-LOVE

I WILL shut these broken toys away
Under the lid where they mutely bide;
I will smile in the face of noisy day,
Just as if baby had never died.

I will take up my work once more,
As if I had never laid it down;
Who will dream that I ever wore
Motherhood's regal, holy crown?

Man's way is hard and sore beset;
Many may fall, but few can win.
Thanks, dear Shepherd! my lamb is safe,—
Safe from sorrow, and safe from sin.

Nevertheless, the way is long,
And tears leap in the light of the sun;
I'd give my world for a cradle-song,
And a kiss from baby—only one.

Mary Clemmer.

GOD BLESS THEE, BOY

THE mother sending forth her child
To meet with cares and strife,
Breathes through her tears her doubts and fears
For the loved one's future life.
No cold "adieu," no "farewell" lives
Within her choking sighs;
But the deepest sob of anguish gives,
"God bless thee, boy!—good-by!"

Eliza Cook.

MY MOTHER

I WALK upon the rocky shore,
Her strength is in the ocean's roar.
I glance into the shaded pool,
Her mind is there so calm and cool.
I hear sweet rippling of the sea,
Naught but her laughter 'tis to me.
I gaze into the starry skies,
And there I see her wondrous eyes.
I look into my inmost mind,
And here her inspiration find.
In all I am and hear and see,
My precious mother is with me.

Josephine Rice Creelman.

MOTHER'S BOY

IN the days of childish troubles, when our little world was darkened
With the clouds that mean such gloomy times when on young hearts they rest,
There was one unfailing refuge, one sure fount of consolation,
And all our troubles faded, sobbed out on our mother's breast.

Oh, that refuge of our childhood! Oh, that love which never faltered!
To whose sympathies so tender not a sorrow was too small
For the kindest understanding, for the fondest of consoling,
Till the clouds began to roll away, and love to lighten all.

When a man keeps fresh within him that touch of a child's dependence,
All his nature feels the power of its softening alloy;
And more human to his fellows, more responsive to all feeling,
Is the man who deep down in his heart is still "a mother's boy."

Anonymous.

THE NAME OF MOTHER

THE light, the spell-word of the heart,
Our guiding star in weal or woe,
Our talisman—our earthly chart—
That sweetest name that earth can know.

We breathed it first with lisping tongue
When cradled in her arms we lay;
Fond memories round that name are hung
That will not, cannot pass away.

We breathed it then, we breath it still,
More dear than sister, friend, or brother;
The gentle power, the magic thrill
Awakened by the name of *Mother*.

Fanny J. Crosby.

THERE ARE NO COLORS

THERE are no colors in God's heaven-bent bow,
Nor is there music in the choiring spheres,
Can paint thy smile from out these youthful years,
Recall the music of thy voice so low
And sweet, dear mother, in the long ago.
But gone art thou. Ah! how the bitter tears
Burned deep into my heart! How memory sears,
But cannot heal those wounds, while tears still flow.
Back from those bright and happy days gone by,
Echoes of childish mirth and cradle song!
Thy guiding hand and presence then were nigh,
And I am weary, and life's road seems wrong.
I miss thy smiling face, thy watchful eye.
Life's heaven was short. Eternity's is long.

John Allister Currie.

IT MAY BE, MOTHER MINE

IT may be, mother mine, when you departed,
White and silent, that you did not wholly go,
Never left your children broken-hearted,
Help them more, are nearer than they know.
And your remembered tones are more than music,
More than day the memory of your smile;
Clear from all the cadences of sorrow,
May I hear them, and behold them in a little while!

Roden Noel.

A LITTLE LAD'S ANSWER

OUR little lad came in one day
With dusty shoes and tired feet;
His playtime had been hard and long,
Out in the summer's noontide heat.
"I'm glad I'm home," he cried, and hung
His torn straw hat up in the hall,
While in the corner by the door
He put away his bat and ball.

"I wonder why," his auntie said,
"This little lad comes always here,
When there are many other homes
As nice as this and quite as near?"
He stood a moment deep in thought,
Then, with a love light in his eye,
He pointed where his mother sat,
And said: "She lives here, that is why."

With beaming face the mother heard;
Her mother-heart was very glad.
A true, sweet answer he had given,
That thoughtful, loving little lad.
And well I know that hosts of lads
Are just as loving, true, and dear;
That they would answer as he did:
"'Tis home, for mother's living here."

Anonymous.

MY MOTHER

MY Mother! With thy calm and holy brow,
And high devoted heart, which suffered still
Unmurmuring, through each degree of ill.
And, because Fate hath willed that mine should be
A poet's soul (at least in my degree),—
And that my verse would faintly shadow forth
What I have seen of pure unselfish worth,
Therefore I speak of thee; that those who read
That trust in woman, which is still my creed,
Thy early-widowed image may recall
And greet thy nature as the type of all.

Sarah Elizabeth Norton.

CHILD AND MOTHER

O MOTHER-MY-LOVE, if you'll give me your hand,
And go where I ask you to wander,
I will lead you away to a beautiful land—
The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder.

We'll walk in a sweet-posie garden out there
  Where moonlight and starlight are streaming
And the flowers and birds are filling the air
  With fragrance and music of dreaming.

There'll be no little tired-out boy to undress,
  No questions or cares to perplex you;
There'll be no little bruises or bumps to caress,
  Nor patching of stockings to vex you.
For I'll rock you away on a silver-dew stream,
  And sing you asleep when you're weary,
And no one shall know of our beautiful dream
  But you and your own little dearie.

And when I am tired I'll nestle my head
  In the bosom that's soothed me so often,
And the wide-awake stars shall sing in my stead
  A song which our dreaming shall soften.
So Mother-my-Love, let me take your dear hand,
  And away through the starlight we'll wander—
Away through the mist to the beautiful land—
  The Dreamland that's waiting out yonder!

Eugene Field.

From "Poems of Eugene Field,"
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Charles Scribner's Sons.

SINCE MY MOTHER DIED

SINCE my mother died, the tone
  Of my voice has fainter grown,
And my words, so strangely few,
Are as strange to me as you.

Something like a lens is drawn
Over all I look upon,
And the world is O so wide,
Since my mother died.

Since my mother died, my face
Knows not any resting-place,
Save in visions, lightly pressed
In its old accustomed rest
On her shoulder. But I wake
With a never-ending ache
In my heart, and naught beside,
Since my mother died.

Since my mother died, the years
Have been drooping like my tears,
Till the bloom is washed away
From my cheeks, and slow decay
Seams the corners of my eyes,
Where my childish laughter lies
Drowned in tears that never dried
Since my mother died.

Since my mother died, my feet
Falter in the crowded street,
With bewildered steps that seem
Tangled in some grassy dream,
And, in busy haunts of men,
Slowly down the past again
Do I wander weary-eyed
Since my mother died.

Since my mother died, O friends!
No one leads me now, or lends
Me a kindly word, or touch
Of the hands I need so much;
No one counsels me, or cares
For my trials, doubts, despairs,
And the world is O so wide,
Since my mother died.

James Whitcomb Riley.

From the Biographical Edition
Of the complete works of James Whitcomb Riley,
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HIS MOTHER

A SODDEN image of a man,
He lurches slowly down the street,
Unconscious of the scornful scan
Of all those that he may meet—
A wreck, an outcast, hopeless, lost,
A drifting hulk that seeks no shore,
But billow-borne and tempest-tossed,
Will drift and drift forevermore.

And yet somewhere each morn and night
His name is whispered soft and low
In prayers that rise to the light
That shines with an eternal glow;

His name is whispered as of old
By one to whom he still is dear—
His mother with her heart of gold
Breathes forth a prayer God will hear.

Though lost to her through all these years,
He still remains her little boy
That ran to her with childish fears
Or brought to her each broken toy;
She has not seen his mottled face
Nor heard his husky, shining tone—
She breathes his name to that white place
Where angels kneel about the throne.

The mother-heart is deep, so deep
That none of us may know how long
Nor yet how surely it will keep
The love it has all sweet and strong;
Each morn and night she breathes his name
In blessings we may think unheard—
She does not know the ways of shame
Down where he looks with eyes all blurred.

A sodden image of a man,
A wreck, an outcast—but can we
Sense aught of the eternal plan,
Know aught of this great mystery?
She breathes her prayers night and dawn
And which among us would destroy
Her fancies of the days agone,
Her blind faith in her "little boy"?

Wilbur D. Nesbit.

IT IS NOT YOURS, O MOTHER, TO COMPLAIN

IT is not yours, O mother, to complain,
Not, mother, yours to weep,
Though nevermore your son again
Shall to your bosom creep,
Though nevermore again you watch your baby sleep.

Though in the greener paths of earth,
Mother and child, no more
We wander; and no more the birth
Of me, whom once you bore,
Seems still the brave reward that once it seemed
of yore;

Though as all passes, day and night,
The seasons and the years,
From you, O mother, this delight,
This also disappears—
Some profit yet survives of all your pangs and tears.

The child, the seed, the grain of corn,
The acorn on the hill,
Each for some separate end is born
In season fit, and still
Each must in strength arise to work the almighty
will.

So from the hearth the children flee,
  By that almighty hand
Austerely led: so one by sea
  Goes forth, and one by land:
  Nor aught of all man's sons escapes from that
    command.

So from the sally each obeys
  The unseen almighty nod;
So till the ending all their ways
  Blindfolded both have trod:
  Nor knew their task at all, but were the tools of God.

And as the fervent smith of yore
  Beat out the glowing blade,
Nor wielded in the front of war
  The weapons that he made,
  But in the tower at home still plied his ringing trade;

So like a sword the son shall roam
  On nobler missions sent;
And as the smith remained at home
  In peaceful turret pent,
  So sits the while at home the mother well content.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

From "Complete Poem,"
Charles Scribner's Sons.

TO MY MOTHER

IF e'er for human bliss or woe
I feel the sympathetic glow;
If e'er my heart has learn'd to know
The gen'rous wish or prayer;
Who sow'd the germ with tender hand?
Who mark'd its infant leaves expand?
My mother's fostering care.

And if one flower of charms refined
May grace the garden of my mind;
'Twas she who nursed it there:
She loved to cherish and adorn
Each blossom of the soil;
To banish every weed and thorn,
That oft opposed her toil!

And oh! if e'er I sigh'd to claim,
The palm, the living palm of Fame,
The glowing wreath of praise;
If e'er I wish'd the glittering stores,
That Fortune on her fav'rite pours;
'Twas but that wealth and fame, if mine,
Round Thee, with streaming rays might shine,
And gild thy sun-bright days!

Yet not that splendor, pomp or power,
Might then irradiate every hour;
For these, my mother! well I know,
On thee no raptures could bestow;

But could thy bounty, warm and kind,
Be, like thy wishes, unconfined;
And fall as manna from the skies,
And bid a train of blessings rise,
  Diffusing joy and peace;
The tear-drop, grateful, pure, and bright,
For thee would beam with softer light,
Than all the diamond's crystal rays,
Than all the emerald's lucid blaze;
And joys of heaven would thrill thy heart,
To bid one bosom-grief depart,
  One tear, one sorrow cease!

Then, oh! may Heaven, that loves to bless,
Bestow the power to cheer distress;
Make thee its minister below,
To light the cloudy path of woe;
To visit the deserted cell,
Where indigence is doom'd to dwell;
To raise, when drooping to the earth,
The blossoms of neglected worth;
And round, with liberal hand, dispense
The sunshine of beneficence!

But ah! if Fate should still deny
Delights like these, too rich and high;
If grief and pain thy steps assail,
In life's remote and wintry vale:
Then as the wild Æolian lyre,
  Complains with soft entrancing number,

When the lone storm awakes the wire,
And bids enchantment cease to slumber;
So filial love, with soothing voice,
E'en then shall teach thee to rejoice;
E'en then shall sweeter, milder sound,
When sorrow's tempest raves around;
While dark misfortune's gales destroy,
The frail mimosa-buds of hope and joy!

Felicia Hemans.

HOMESICK

COME to me, O my Mother! come to me,
Thine own son slowly dying far away!
Through the moist ways of the wide ocean, blown
By great invisible winds, come stately ships
To this calm bay for quiet anchorage;
They come, they rest awhile, they go away,
But, O my Mother, never comest thou!
The snow is round thy dwelling, the white snow,
That cold soft revelation pure as light,
And the pine-spur is mystically fringed,
Laced with incrusted silver. Here—ah me!—
The winter is decrepit, underborn,
A leper with no power but his disease.
Why am I from thee, Mother, far from thee?
Far from the frost enchantment, and the woods
Jewelled from bough to bough? O home, my home!
O river in the valley of my home,
With mazy-winding motion intricate,
Twisting thy deathless music underneath

The polished ice-work,—must I nevermore
Behold thee with familiar eyes, and watch
Thy beauty changing with the changeful day,
Thy beauty constant to the constant change?

David Gray.

AT FOURSCORE

SHE sits in the gathering shadows
By the porch where the roses blow
And her thoughts are back in the summer
That vanished long ago.

She forgets the graves on the hillside,
She forgets that she is old,
And remembers only the gladness
That the old times used to hold.

She hears, as of old, the voices
Of the dear ones who are dead;
She smooths out the shining tangles
That crown each little head;

She kisses the faces lifted
To her as in days of old,
And the heart of the dreaming mother
Is full of peace untold.

So, while the night comes round her,
She sits with her children there,
Forgetting the years that took them,
And the snowflakes in her hair.

Eben E. Rexford.

RAPHAEL'S MASTERPIECE

(A man of to-day gives the great painter a commission)

COME, Raphael, I would have you paint me a picture.
You have made some repute for yourself with
Madonnas,
But now, sir, to your masterpiece!
Your hand must have more cunning
Than it ever knew daubing about church walls,
For this time you must paint with your soul.
The subject? There she is—
My mother.
Not a Gainsborough lady—I confess it quite freely—
Nor a Reynolds' beauty, but they were faultlessly inane,
With doll faces and dainty postures,
But no more reality than if they had stepped
Off of some decorated fan.

Are you squinting your eye there critically
Thinking she will not do?
Must you have something pretty
Before you can make it beautiful?
I would have you make something beautiful,
Divine—I said you must paint with your soul.

I protest, sir. What's all this toggery
You're decking her up in?

She never saw any apparel like that in her life.
You must have the right colors?
Indeed! Can't you paint things as they are?
The everyday clothes we've seen her in all of her life?
You object?
Well then, let her plain dress spoil the picture.
I won't have her turned into a popinjay
Or a court lady—I am simply asking you to paint
My mother.

Yes, I'll agree to the rocking chair,
Although it would be more natural to see her working.
Take that low one with the squeaky rocker,
Over there by the window.
No, you can't stick a poll parrot on her shoulder—
For one thing, she never liked poll parrots,
But little singing birds have always been a joy to her.
Here, put this old sewing-basket close by her,
With the dried gourd on which to mend stockings.
Don't forget her steel-rimmed spectacles—
They are always getting lost but just now
They are mixed in with the mending.
And paint the edge of this button-box—
Maybe it will give you some color
For it contains buttons of every size and description
From all the dresses and clothes ever worn by any member of the family.
Yes, you can put an open book on the table
For she likes to read when she has time, and now—
Go ahead.

Why, painter, you're making her face as smooth and white
as an alabaster box!
You do not want her to look dried and cracked?
Your eyes see a lot of creases in her face
But I told you to paint with your soul.
Those are not ugly lines—they are tracings of sorrow,
And care and tired days and watchful nights,
And silent sufferings that she never said anything about.
Now that I look more closely, you have her hair all wrong.
Gray won't mix with brown in a picture?
Then, sir, the picture must be changed.
And those hands! Why, you've made them
Five-fingered lilies.
But they are much more beautiful as they really are.
They have washed clothes, week after week,
And dishes three times a day—
She never let them stack up from one meal to another—
And cooked and cleaned and scrubbed.
Change them, please. Have them rough,
And somewhat large, and then—
Show that they've done a thousand things
That no other hands in the world would have done
Because they loved others more than their own prettiness.

And the eyes, sir! You've made two colored spots
On the canvas. But you will have to dip your brush
Into mystic colors to catch their infinite lights and shadows.
And you have failed to show her remarkable wisdom.
You smile, inferring you could puzzle her with a few elementary questions.
I was not talking about knowledge, sir,

But she is love-wise and knows far more
Than philosophers ever dreamed.

I am too critical?
I am sorry.
It was foolish of me to expect you to paint
My mother.
No, don't leave the canvas.
I have a better picture—
It is in my heart—love is a truer painter.
Good day to you, sir!

Joseph Morris.

A MOTHER'S LOVE

A MOTHER'S Love—how sweet the name!
What is a Mother's Love?—
A noble, pure, and tender flame
Enkindled from above,
To bless a heart of earthly mold;
The warmest love that can grow cold:
This is a Mother's Love.

To bring a helpless babe to light,
Then, while it lies forlorn,
To gaze upon that dearest sight
And feel herself new-born,
In its existence lose her own,
And live and breathe in it alone:
This is a Mother's Love.

To mark its growth from day to day,
  Its opening charms admire,
Catch from its eye the earliest ray
  Of intellectual fire;
To smile and listen while it talks
And lend a finger when it walks:
  This is a Mother's Love.

James Montgomery.

SEVEN TIMES FOUR

(Maternity)

HEIGH ho! daisies and buttercups,
  Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall,
When the wind wakes how they rock in the grasses,
  And dance with the cuckoo-buds, slender and small:
Here's two bonny boys, and here's mother's own lasses,
  Eager to gather them all.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
  Mother shall thread them a daisy chain;
Sing them a song of the pretty hedge-sparrow,
  That loved her brown little ones, loved them full fain;
Sing, "Heart thou art wide though the house be but narrow"—
  Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
  Sweet wagging cowslips, they bend and they bow;
A ship sails afar over warm ocean waters,
  And haply one musing doth stand at her prow.
O bonny brown sons, and O sweet little daughters,
  Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
  Fair yellow daffodils stately and tall;
A sunshiny world full of laughter and leisure,
  And fresh hearts unconscious of sorrow and thrall,
Send down on their pleasure smiles passing its measure—
God that is over us all.

Jean Ingelow.

SEVEN TIMES SIX

(Giving in Marriage)

TO bear, to nurse, to rear,
  To watch, and then to lose:
To see my bright ones disappear,
  Drawn up like morning dews,—
To bear, to nurse, to rear,
  To watch and then to lose:
This have I done when God drew near
  Among his own to choose.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
  And with thy lord depart
In tears that he, as soon as shed,
  Will let no longer smart,—
To hear, to heed, to wed,
  This while thou didst I smiled,
For now it was not God who said,
  "Mother, give me thy child."

O fond, O fool, and blind,
  To God I gave with tears,
But when a man like grace would find,
  My soul put by her fears,—

O, fond, O fool, and blind,
God guards in happier spheres;
That man will guard where he did bind
Is hope for unknown years.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
Fair lot that maidens choose,
Thy mother's tenderest words are said,
Thy face no more she views;
Thy mother's lot, my dear,
She doth in nought accuse;
Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,
To love,—and then to lose.

Jean Ingelow.

AD MATREM

OFT in the after days, when thou and I
Have fallen from the cope of human view,
When, both together, under the sweet sky
We sleep beneath the daisies and the dew,
Men will recall thy gracious presence bland,
Conning the pictured sweetness of thy face;
Will pore o'er paintings by thy plastic hand,
And vaunt thy skill, and tell thy deeds of grace.
Oh, may they then, who crown thee with true bays,
Saying, "What love unto her son she bore!"
Make this addition to thy perfect praise,
"Nor ever yet was mother worshiped more!"
So shall I live with thee, and thy dear fame
Shall link my love unto thine honored name.

Julian Henry Fane.

THE ALCHEMIST

WHO soothed me after my boyish fight,
And held me in her arms so tight,
And knew—*and knew*—my cause was right?
My mother.

Who, when low grades from school were sent,
Healed my hurt pride, cheered my intent,
And knew I would be President?
My mother.

Who, when my dreams had come to naught,
In spite of all that worldlings thought,
Believed, believed, and aye besought?
My mother.

Who, when I reeked with sin and shame,
Without a word of grief or blame
Saw one true spark and made it flame?
My mother.

Who, when in blackest hell I lie,
Will lift my thwarted soul on high
And make hell heaven, if she is by?
My mother.

St. Clair Adams.

HIS MOTHER'S WAY

WHEN he in his cradle sleepin',
Wid dat purty smile er his,
His mammy come a-creepin'
En wake him wid a kiss.

En den it's "Go ter sleepy,
Sweetheart, fer mammy's sake."
But, ain't a bit er use in it:
She kiss him right awake!

She allus dar a-peepin'
En talkin' out lak dis:
"He look so purty sleepin'
I 'bleege ter steal a kiss!"

En den it's "Go ter sleepy,
Sweetheart, fer mammy's sake!"
But, ain't a bit er use in it—
She kiss him right awake!

Frank L. Stanton.

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MY VISION

WHEREVER my feet may wander
Wherever I chance to be,
There comes, with the coming of even' time
A vision sweet to me.
I see my mother sitting
In the old familiar place,
And she rocks to the tune her needles sing,
And thinks of an absent face.

I can hear the roar of the city
About me now as I write;
But over an hundred miles of snow
My thought-steeds fly to-night,

To the dear little cozy cottage,
And the room where mother sits,
And slowly rocks in her easy chair
And thinks of me as she knits.

Sometimes with the merry dancers
When my feet are keeping time,
And my heart beats high, as young hearts will,
To the music's rhythmic chime;
My spirit slips over the distance
Over the glitter and whirl,
To my mother who sits, and rocks, and knits,
And thinks of her "little girl."

When I listen to voices that flatter,
And smile, as women do,
To whispered words that may be sweet,
But are not always true;
I think of the sweet, quaint picture
Afar in quiet ways,
And I know one smile of my mother's eyes
Is better than all their praise.

And I know I can never wander
Far from the path of right,
Though snares are set for a woman's feet
In places that seem most bright.

For the vision is with me always,
  Wherever I chance to be,
Of mother sitting, rocking and knitting,
  Thinking and praying for me.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

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SOME TIME

LAST night, my darling, as you slept,
  I thought I heard you sigh,
And to your little crib I crept,
  And watched a space thereby;
Then, bending down, I kissed your brow—
  For, oh! I love you so—
You are too young to know it now,
  But some time you shall know.

Some time, when, in a darkened place
  Where others come to weep,
Your eyes shall see a weary face
  Calm in eternal sleep;
The speechless lips, the wrinkled brow,
  The patient smile may show—
You are too young to know it now,
  But some time you shall know.

Look backward, then, into the years,
  And see me here to-night—
See, O my darling! how my tears
  Are falling as I write;

And feel once more upon your brow
The kiss of long ago—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you shall know.

Eugene Field.

From "Poems of Eugene Field,"
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MOTHER'S GLASSES

I'VE told about the times that Ma can't find her pocket-
book,
And how we have to hustle round for it to help her look,
But there's another care we know that often comes our
way,
I guess it happens easily a dozen times a day.
It starts when first the postman through the door a letter
passes,
And Ma says: "Goodness gracious me! Wherever are my
glasses?"

We hunt 'em on the mantelpiece an' by the kitchen sink,
Until Ma says: "Now, children, stop, an' give me time to
think
Just when it was I used 'em last an' just exactly where.
Yes, now I know—the dining room. I'm sure you'll find
'em there."
We even look behind the clock, we busy boys an' lasses,
Until somebody runs across Ma's missing pair of glasses.

We've found 'em in the Bible, an' we've found 'em in the flour,
We've found 'em in the sugar bowl, an' once we looked an hour
Before we came across 'em in the padding of her chair;
An' many a time we've found 'em in the topknot of her hair.
It's a search that ruins order an' the home completely wrecks,
For there's no place where you may not find poor Ma's elusive specs.

But we're mighty glad, I tell you, that the duty's ours to do,
An' we hope to hunt those glasses till our time of life is through;
It's a little bit of service that is joyous in its thrill,
It's a task that calls us daily an' we hope it always will.
Rich or poor, the saddest mortals of all the joyless masses
Are the ones who have no mother dear to lose her reading glasses.

Edgar A. Guest.

From "A Heap o' Livin'," Copyright, 1916, The Reilly & Lee Co.

LIKE HIS MOTHER USED TO MAKE

("Uncle Jake's Place," St. Jo, Missouri, 1874)

"I WAS born in Indiany," says a stranger, lank and slim,
As us fellers in the restarunt was kind o' guyin' him,
And Uncle Jake was slidin' him another punkin pie
And a' extry cup o' coffee, with a twinkle in his eye,—

"I was born in Indiany—more'n forty year' ago—
And I hain't be'n back in twenty—an' I'm workin' back'ards slow;
But I've et in ever' restarunt 'twixt here and Santy Fee,
And I want to state this coffee tastes like gittin' home, to me!

"Pour us out another, Daddy," says the feller, warmin' up,
A-speakin' 'crost a saucerful, as Uncle tuk his cup,—
"When I seed yer sign out yander," he went on, to Uncle Jake,—
"'Come in and git some coffee like yer mother used to make,'—
I thought of *my* old mother, and the Posey County farm,
And me a little kid ag'in, a-hangin' in her arm,
As she set the pot a-bilin', broke the eggs and poured 'em in"—
And the feller kind o' halted, with a trimble in his chin:

And Uncle Jake he fetched the feller's coffee back, and stood
As solemn, fer a minute, as a' undertaker would;
Then he sort o' turned and tiptoed to'rds the kitchen door—and nex',
Here comes his old wife out with him, a-rubbin' of her specs—
And she rushes fer the stranger, and she hollers out, "It's him!—
Thank God we've met him comin'!—Don't you know yer mother, Jim?"

And the feller, as he grabbed her, says,— "You bet I hain't
forgot—
But," wipin' of his eyes, says he, "yer coffee's mighty
hot!"

James Whitcomb Riley.

From the Biographical Edition
Of the complete works of James Whitcomb Riley,
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There is a religion in all deep love, but the love of a mother is the veil of a softer light between the heart and the heavenly Father.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

A woman's love
Is mighty, but a mother's heart is weak,
And by its weakness overcomes.

James Russell Lowell.

Youth fades; love droops; the leaves of friendship fall:
A mother's secret hope outlives them all.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Stories first heard at mother's knee are never wholly forgotten—a little spring that never quite dries up in our journey through scorching years.

Ruffini.

Many make the household but only one the home.

James Russell Lowell.

God could not be everywhere; therefore He made mothers.

An Old Jewish Saying.

Every child walks into existence through the golden gate of love.

Henry Ward Beecher.

She was my friend—I had but her—no more,
No other upon earth—and as for heaven,
I am as they that seek a sign, to whom
No sign is given. My mother! Oh, my mother!

Bayard Taylor.

Mother love . . . hath this unlikeness to any other love: Tender to the object, it can be infinitely tyrannical to itself, and thence all its power of self-sacrifice. *Lew Wallace.*

A mother is as different from anything else that God ever thought of, as can possibly be. She is a distinct and individual creation. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

There is one point on which, till his dying day, her child can be made to feel—his mother's influence. *J. M. Matthews.*

No language can express the power and beauty and heroism of a mother's love. *Chapin.*

It is a wonderful thing, a mother; other folks can love you, but only your mother understands. She works for you, looks after you, loves you, forgives you anything you may do, understands you, and then the only bad thing she ever does to you is to die and leave you. *Baroness Von Hutton.*

At first babes feed on the mother's bosom, but always on her heart. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

One good mother is worth a hundred schoolmasters.
George Herbert.

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you.
Isaiah.

A man never knows all that his mother has been to him till it's too late to let her know that he sees it.
William Dean Howells.

One lamp, thy mother's love, amid the stars shall lift its pure flame changeless, and before the throne of God burn through eternity. *Nathaniel P. Willis.*

In after life you may have friends, fond, dear friends; but never will you have again the inexpressible love and gentleness lavished upon you, which none but a mother bestows.

Lord Macaulay.

Men are what their mothers make them.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Mother—that was the bank where we deposited all our hurts and worries. *T. DeWitt Talmage.*

There is in all this cold and hollow world no fount of deep, strong, deathless love, save that within a mother's heart.

Felicia Hemans.

Heaven is at the feet of mothers. *Roebuck.*

A babe is a mother's anchor. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

Where there is a mother in the house, matters speed well.

A. Bronson Alcott.

A mother's prayers, silent and gentle, can never miss the road to the throne of all bounty. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

France needs nothing so much to promote her regeneration as good mothers. *Napoleon.*

What instruction the baby brings to the mother!

Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

The bearing and the training of a child is woman's wisdom.

Alfred Tennyson.

His sweetest dreams were still of that dear voice that soothed his infancy. *Robert Southey.*

I have not wept these forty years; but now my mother comes afresh into my eyes. *John Dryden.*

When God thought of MOTHER, He must have laughed with satisfaction, and framed it quickly,—so rich, so deep, so divine, so full of soul, power, and beauty, was the conception.

Henry Ward Beecher.

A mother's love is indeed the golden link that binds youth to age; and he is still but a child, however time may have furrowed his cheek, or silvered his brow, who can yet recall, with softened heart, the fond devotion, or the gentle chidings, of the best friend that God ever gives us. *Bovee.*

To be a mother is the greatest vocation in the world. No being has a position of such power and influence. She holds in her hands the destiny of nations; for to her is necessarily committed the making of the nation's citizens. *Hannah Whitall Smith.*

But one on earth is better than the wife—that is the mother.

Leopold Schefer.

A man takes counsel with his wife, he obeys his mother: he obeys her long after she has ceased to live: and the ideas which he has received from her become principles stronger even than his passions. *Aimi Martin.*

Maternal love! thou word that sums all bliss.

Robert Pollok.

See to it that your boys and girls, when they grow up, do not remember you as an anxious, worried, irritable mother; but live such a trustful life before them that they will have always a picture of peace and trust when they think of you.

Hannah Whitall Smith.

And all my mother came into mine eyes
And gave me up to tears.

William Shakespeare.

The future of society is in the hands of the mothers. If the world was lost through woman, she alone can save it.

De Beaufort.

The child takes most of his nature of the mother, besides speech, manners, and inclination. *Herbert Spencer.*

A mother has, perhaps, the hardest earthly lot; and yet no mother worthy of the name ever gave herself thoroughly for her child who did not feel that, after all, she reaped what she had sown. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

No mother who stands upon low ground herself can hope to place her children upon a loftier plane. They may reach it, but it will not be through her. *Julia C. R. Dorr.*

The loss of a mother is always keenly felt, even if her health be such as to incapacitate her from taking an active part in the care of the family. She is the sweet rallying-point for affection, obedience, and a thousand tendernesses. Dreary the blank when she is withdrawn! *Lamartine.*

Observe how soon, and to what a degree, this influence begins to operate! Her first ministration for her infant is to enter, as it were, the valley of the shadow of death, and win its life at the peril of her own! How different must an affection thus founded be from all others! *Lydia H. Sigourney.*

There is perhaps no such moment of exquisite joy, of deep unutterable thanksgiving taking the place of pain and sorrow as when a woman knows herself to be the living mother of a living child. *Andrew Murray.*

A mother's love, the best love; God's love, the highest love.

From the German.

The instruction received at the mother's knee, and the paternal lessons, together with the pious and sweet souvenirs of the fireside, are never effaced entirely from the soul. *Robert de Lamennais.*

Mothers are the only goddesses in whom the whole world believes. *Anonymous.*

A mother is a mother still,
The holiest thing alive.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Earth held no symbol, had no living sign
To image forth the mother's deathless love.

Mrs. Hale.

Ere yet her child hath drawn its earliest breath,
A mother's love begins—it grows till death!
Lives before life, with death, not dies, but seems
The very substance of immortal dreams.

Anonymous.

Motherhood is priced
Of God, at price no man may dare
To lessen.

Helen Hunt Jackson.

There is a sight all hearts beguiling—
A youthful mother to an infant smiling,
Who, with spread arms and dancing feet,
And cooing voice, returns its answers sweet.

Joanna Baillie.

By the opinion men have of women we can generally judge of the sort of mother they had. *Hannah Whitall Smith.*

The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.

Henry Ward Beecher.

All that I am or hope to be I owe to my mother.

Abraham Lincoln.

What are Raphael's Madonnas but the shadow of a mother's love, fixed in permanent outline forever?

Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.

Spanish Proverb.

All that is purest and best in man is but the echo of a mother's benediction. The hero's deeds are a mother's prayers fulfilled.

Frederick W. Morton.

Mother is the name for God in the lips and hearts of little children.

William M. Thackeray.

Unhappy is the man for whom his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable.

Richter.

No language can express the power and beauty and heroism and majesty of a mother's love. It shrinks not where man cowers, and grows stronger where man faints, and over the wastes of worldly fortune sends the radiance of quenchless fidelity like a star in heaven.

E. H. Chapin.

If there be aught surpassing human deed or word or thought, it is a mother's love.

Marchioness de Spadara.

The mother's love—there's none so pure,
So constant and so kind;
No human passion doth endure
Like this within the mind.

Anonymous.

Is not a young mother one of the sweetest sights which life shows us?

William M. Thackeray.

Nature's loving proxy, the watchful mother.

Bulwer-Lytton.

I think it must somewhere be written that the virtues of mothers shall, occasionally, be visited on their children, as well as the sins of fathers.

Charles Dickens.

My mother was as mild as any saint,
And nearly canonized by all she knew,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness.

Alfred Tennyson.

Mother! Dear sacred name and sweet!
We take her tender daily care just
As the thoughtless flowers look up to God
For daily light, because we know 'tis ours.

L. H. Underwood.

When we are sick, where can we turn for succor;
And when the world looks cold and surly on us,
Where can we go to meet a warmer eye
With such sure confidence as to mother?

Joanna Baillie.

The years have altered the form and the life,
But the heart is unchanged by time,
And still he is only thy boy as of old,
O little Mother of Mine.

Walter H. Brown.

To the one who loves us when fortune's bright,
But more when the sky's overcast;
Whose heart reveals, yet never conceals,
Our Mother! first and last.

Anonymous.

For unwearying patience and unchanging tenderness, the love of a true mother stands next to the love of our Father in Heaven.

Anonymous.

A mother who boasts two boys was ever accounted rich.
Robert Browning.

I remember my mother's prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life. *Abraham Lincoln.*

The real religion of the world comes from women much more than from men—from mothers most of all, who carry the key of our souls in their bosoms. *Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

All that I am, my mother made me. *John Quincy Adams.*

The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother.
Napoleon.

Womanliness means only motherhood;
All love begins and ends there.
Robert Browning.

I would desire for a friend the son who never resisted the tears of his mother. *Lacretelle.*

My son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honor and of gain,
Oh! do not dread thy mother's door;
Think not of me with grief and pain.
William Wordsworth.

Never comes mortal utterance so near to eternity as when a child utters words of loving praise to a mother! Every syllable drops into the jewel box of her memory, to be treasured for ever and ever. *George B. Lyon.*

She was as good as goodness is,
Her acts and all her words were kind,
And high above all memories
I hold the beauty of her mind.
Frederic Hentz Adams.

Comparing one man with another,
You'll find this maxim true,
That the man who is good to his mother
Will always be good to you!

Fred Emerson Brooks.

The mother's heart is always with her children.

Old Saying.

My dear mother with the truthfulness of a mother's heart, ministered to all my woes, outward and inward, and even against hope kept prophesying good. *Thomas Carlyle.*

Every man, for the sake of the great blessed Mother in Heaven, and for the love of his own little mother on earth, should handle all womankind gently, and hold them in all honor.

Alfred Tennyson.

Mother's love grows by giving. *Charles Lamb.*

Maids must be wives and mothers, to fulfill
The entire and holiest end of women's being.

Frances Anne Kemble.

A mother's love, in a degree, sanctifies the most worthless offspring. *Hosea Ballou.*

The woman's task is not easy—no task worth doing is easy—but in doing it, and when she has done it, there shall come to her the highest and holiest joy known to mankind.

Theodore Roosevelt.

If I were asked to name one principle that seemed to have an almost universal application, it would be this one—show me the mother and I will show you the man! *Theodore L. Cuyler.*

Mighty is the force of motherhood! It transforms all things by its vital heat; it turns timidity into fierce courage, and dread-

less defiance into tremulous submission; it turns thoughtlessness into foresight, and yet stills all anxiety into calm content; it makes selfishness become self-denial, and gives even a hard vanity the glance of admiring love. *George Eliot.*

To a man there is no better support nor comfort than his mother, whose love is more nearly divine than any other human love which he can ever experience, because it is the most unselfish of all loves, and the love which is sure to remain his from the cradle to the grave. *Francis Evans.*

If you would reform the world from its errors and vices, begin by enlisting the mothers. *C. Simmons.*

The mother's yearning, that completest type of life within another life which is the essence of human love, feels the presence of the cherished child, even in the base degraded man.
George Eliot.

The dignity, the grandeur, the tenderness, the everlasting and divine significance of motherhood. *T. De Witt Talmage.*

If the whole world were put into one scale, and my mother into the other, the world would kick the beam.
Lord Langdale.

No joy in nature is so sublimely affecting as the joy of a mother at the good fortune of her child. *Richter.*

Say to mothers, what a holy charge is theirs, with what a kingly power their love might rule the fountains of the new-born mind. *Mrs. Sigourney.*

Oh, wondrous power! how little understood
Entrusted to the mother's mind alone,
To fashion genius, form the soul for good,
Inspire a West, or train a Washington.
Mrs. Hale.

It is generally admitted, and very frequently proved, that virtue and genius, and all the natural good qualities which men possess, are derived from their mothers. *Hook.*

The love of a mother is never exhausted, it never changes, it never tires. A father may turn his back on his child, brothers and sisters become inveterate enemies, husbands may desert their wives, wives their husbands. But a mother's love endures through all; in good repute, in bad repute, in the face of the world's condemnation, a mother still loves on, and still hopes that her child may turn from his evil ways, and repent; still she remembers the infant smiles that once filled her bosom with rapture, the merry laugh, the joyful shout of his childhood, the opening promise of his youth; and she can never be brought to think him all unworthy. *Washington Irving.*

THE END.

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